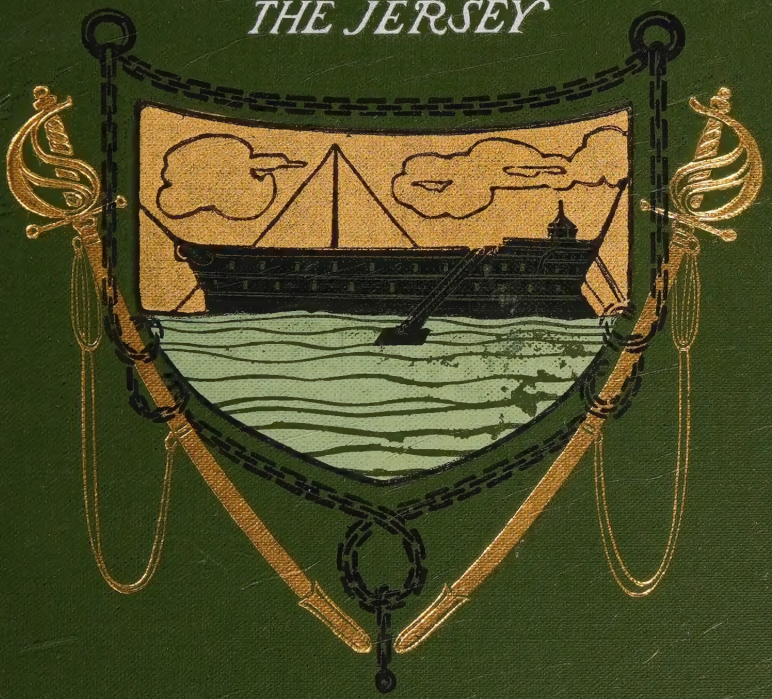
DALRYMPLE

A ROMANCE OF THE PRISON SHIP THE JERSEY



by

MARY C. FRANCIS

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Mrs. M. E. Dillon
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Dalrymple

A Romance of the British Prison Ship, The Jersey

By
MARY C. FRANCIS
Author of "A Son of Destiny"—The Story of Andrew Jackson

NEW YORK
JAMES POTT & COMPANY
1904

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"The inextinguishable spark,
which fires the souls of patriots."

—LEONIDAS.

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CHAPTER I

When We Meet Again

"ROBERT, you really ought to go now."

The young man intently watched the girl as she drew out another long silken thread for the half finished pattern on her embroidery frame, and his eager eyes missed not a detail of the picture, the shapely figure in the tight-fitting waist, the soft ivory of the skin, the wealth of dark hair tinged with high lights in the sunshine, massed above the white, tempting nape of her neck as she bent over the frame; the white hand and supple wrist. The eyes he could not see, for they were discreetly lowered under the long, curling lashes, but he knew them and their changing lights well. How often had they sparkled into his! A swift, hot tingling swept him. He stooped and kissed her neck just where the waving hair escaped it.

With a cry the girl sprang to her feet, her face flaming and her eyes now plainly enough two gray disks starry with excitement that might have been partly anger. "Robert! Robert!" she cried, in a half stifled voice. "Oh, how you frightened me! What

if uncle should come? What if he should find you here?"

"Hush, hush, Bess, not so loud! 'Pon my word, a woman can make more noise than a field piece. Let him come if he wants to. I'm tired of this. I told him long ago just what I was going to do, and you——" he reached out his arms and drew her within them, "you, Bess, you said that even if he didn't consent you would——"

"Yes, yes, Robert," assented the girl, only half yielding to his caress, and anxiously watching the door, "when this dreadful war is over, or if Uncle Peter ever quits hating the Whigs so, or, or, if anything happens so that——" she stopped abruptly, her color coming and going and her breath fluttering nervously. Bewitched by her beauty at that moment her captor would have defied single-handed all of Howe's army that lay encamped on Staten Island.

"So that, what?" he asked in a low, even tone. "So that, what, Elizabeth?"

Unconsciously his hold on her had tightened. The girl struggled in real agitation now to free herself.

"Oh," she almost sobbed. "Oh, if he comes!"

With a smothered exclamation in his throat the young fellow quickly released her and took one step backward with a lithe motion that spoke of strong, free muscles. The little shake that he gave himself

seemed to release all his six feet of manhood that was encased in the soiled uniform of a lieutenant of the Continental Army, and he stood looking at her with the one expression on his face that she feared. But she was looking down, flushed, alarmed, lovely, in her most provoking mood, and in silence Robert breathed profanity upon the one man who stood between him and this tantalizing prize. It was very still in the room, and the windows showed a fair, sunlit scene that spoke not of war or untoward love affairs. Around her lay the overturned embroidery frame, the tangled skeins of silk, the disordered work-basket, and in the chaos Mufti, the gray kitten, promptly proceeded to roll herself into a silken ball, unheeded by her mistress.

"Elizabeth!"

No answer.

"Elizabeth, what does this mean? If you fear your uncle more than you love me, we will have to come to another understanding. I have not seen you for months, and now, when the British are closing in upon us and no one knows what the result may be, I get away to see you, and you have scarcely been kind to me. Almost from the moment I entered the room you have spoken to me of going away. If you want to be rid of me——"

"Robert, oh, Robert!" Two great tears fell on the floor, but the upturned eyes looked steadfastly into

his. "Oh, Robert, don't say such cruel things. I told you that Uncle Peter had only gone to The Fields, and he may be back any moment. You know yourself what the result will be if he finds you here, and that is why I begged you to go. It is only for your safety, and not because I—I want you to go." A pathetic break in the voice and fast falling tears would have impaired the beauty of some women, but Elizabeth Windham only succeeded in looking more dangerously lovely than ever. Robert Dalrymple was as impulsive in his wooing as his fighting, and it was not in his quick blood to tamely stand by and see a woman in tears. The entangled kitten barely escaped his impetuous motion as he regained her in his arms, saying:

"Bess! Bess! Sweetheart! Stop crying. Look at me. There, dear, I'll go; I'll do anything you say, only don't shed any tears. I don't want them for myself, and hang me if I'll let you shed them for any other man. As for the result if your uncle should meet me——" He threw back his head and laughed, a free, hearty laugh. "Old Peter Simpson, the worst hated Tory in New York. Lord! how Putnam has it in for him for his conniving with Cunningham and Sproat. We'll decorate a rope's end with some of them yet."

He seemed to have become more patriotic than personal, but he did not forget to gently caress her hair

and to hold her as close to him as her maidenly reserve would permit. She smiled sunnily, and he marveled again, as he always had, at the dimple that appeared at the corner of her mouth.

"Oh!" she said, restored to her usual sweetness, "if you had heard all the things Uncle Peter said not long ago when that man Hickey was hanged in Colonel Rutgers' field for putting poison in General Washington's peas. He stamped around all day and said it ought to have been that Virginia farmer instead, and then he gave a dinner to a lot of men. I don't know who all were here, but Governor Tryon was one, and I think they drank a good deal. Then, about midnight, there was an awful pounding on the knocker, and the Vigilance Committee called him down and gave him a paper saying that if he said any more such things about General Washington he'd be given a bishop's coat. Oh! imagine Uncle Peter in tar and feathers! Wouldn't it be too funny for anything!"

"Save the feathers of your best bed for it, Bess," said the young man, heartily. "He will defy Plato's definition of man after he is dressed out in them. But, Bess, I didn't come here to waste my time, and I have to be off, as you said. I must be at Richmond Hill by noon, to deliver dispatches to General Washington, and after I leave you now it may be some time before I see you again. So kiss me good-bye, Sweet,

and—look up here, so —— See to it that none of these confounded red-coated officers who are so fond of our women come dangling around after you. A Whig is good enough even for the most beautiful woman in New York. Eh, Bess."

He had a brief combat with the round, warm arms that partly fought, partly embraced him, and then, from the safe vantage of his shoulder, Miss Windham, having apparently changed her mind, murmured: "Oh, Rob, must you really go?"

"Yes, dear; you know things are pretty serious for the cause nowadays, and every man is needed. Howe and Clinton are closing in around the city, and they have thirty thousand men against our eleven thousand, unless the new enlistments called for by the General give us a few more. And what with Gates' jealousy, a pottering Congress, poverty, bickerings and desertions, God knows how His Excellency keeps up heart like he does. If that precious uncle of yours, and a lot more like him, weren't in cahoots with Tryon to smuggle arms and ammunition up into Westchester County, some of us might rest easier. Bess, couldn't you drop a gentle hint to the chairman of the Vigilance Committee about those feathers? 'Pon my word, I've a mind to see the old sinner decked out in them."

"Poor uncle," sighed Elizabeth. "I'm really sorry for him. He's very fond of me, and he's never the

least bit cross except when something reminds him of you, and then he's dreadful. He's always reminding me that he came of the nobility, and talking about marrying me 'in my own station.' I don't dare to mention your name or let on in any way that I——" she stopped, blushed and affected a partial escape from his eager arms. For an instant only. He made her prisoner again and said, tenderly but anxiously: "All I care for, darling, is what you say; *your* promise, *your* words, not what all the Tory uncles in New York say. Tell me once more that you love me."

Whether Elizabeth whispered the desired statement in his ear or no not even the kitten could have heard, but Robert, with a triumphant air, exclaimed aloud: "When we meet again, you shall be mine."

One moment they were lost in a lovers' embrace, then the door on the opposite side of the room opened and a portly, well-conditioned man of between fifty and sixty entered with the unmistakable air of the master of the house. One long stride forward he took, then raised his stout walking stick threateningly and fairly bellowed:

"You! You here again! You damned Whig! How dare you enter my house again after I forbade you? Out! Out! Go on the instant, and mind you I've got enough influence to get you into jail if you show your face around here again. Get out! Out!" He

pounded the floor with his cane, and turned to Elizabeth. "And you, get to your room at once. I'll teach you to philander with a damned ——"

"Sir," interrupted Robert, "I am to blame, not Elizabeth, and I beg of you ——"

"I'll have no words with you, puppy. I'm master of my own household, and I'll do as I please."

"And I'm my own master," cried Robert, "and I take no orders from you. What's more, Elizabeth won't in another year when she's of age, and I tell you again that I love her and have asked her to be my wife."

Peter Simpson, naturally rubicund, turned a fine purple. He leaned heavily on his stick and said, almost as thickly as he sometimes spoke after dallying with his rare Burgundy: "You shall never marry her."

Robert saluted with deep disrespect. "Your threat isn't worth a wagon-load of Continental money," he said, cheerfully. "I'm sorry to deprive you of the pleasure of my company, but I'm on my way to Richmond Hill with news of the doings of you and some of your friends, and if all I hear is true we'll need a good crop of hemp. I have the honor to bid you good-day. Good-bye, Bess." He kissed the tips of his fingers to her, vaulted lightly through the low window and was gone.

"Uncle Peter," gasped Elizabeth, the thumping of her heart evident through her bodice, "indeed, he—he just stepped in for a minute to say good-bye before——"

"Silence! I'll make it good-bye with a vengeance. What! Are you no better than any baggage to——"

He stopped suddenly, and Elizabeth was too agitated to note that his eyes had rested on the portrait that hung just back of her, the picture of his dead sister, whose only child was his ward and treasure. Both of her parents had died when she was but a baby, and Peter had made her his especial pride and joy. Never in all his anger did he ever forget that solemn promise he had made. He remembered it now. "To your room," he finished, abruptly. "Wait, where is Amanda?"

"Cousin Amanda has gone over to Long Island for the day."

"It's strange she didn't tell me. You take advantage of our absence too much. Do as I bade you."

Only too glad to obey, the girl snatched the now thoroughly enmeshed kitten and fled to her own apartment. Throwing herself on the bed and laughing hysterically, she held the soft, gray little cat above her, shaking the tangled, multi-colored mass until the rainbow filaments flew in a cloud.

"Oh, Mufti," she laughed, with a sob in her voice, "we're both in a web, and I wonder if I'll get out."

She sat up and diligently unwound the kitten.

CHAPTER II

For the Right Cause

THERE was apparently nothing but peace in sight when a few days later the master of the house sat after dinner with a single guest. It was a hot August day, but the mahogany of the dining-room, the simple but elegant heavy silver, the massive carved sideboard and embroidered draperies tempered the heat into a cool, reposeful seclusion. Peter Simpson was one of the wealthiest men in New York, and his home in Broad Street was in the heart of the then fashionable residence section of the city, and the daily afternoon promenade of belles and beaux on the aristocratic thoroughfare of the Battery was almost within a stone's throw. The promenade had lacked its more prominent picturesque features for many weeks, for in addition to the fact that it was the heart of summer and many therefore out of town, the encampment of two armies near and in the city had tinged life and affairs with a military rather than a social aspect. As far north as The Fields, now City Hall Park, such homes as those of Peter Simpson extended. Beyond that, where now the Palisades look

down on the modern castles of wealth, was such an irregular broken space as the imagination can scarcely picture to-day.

The wooded heights of the Haarlem were nothing but virgin country, and where the teeming panorama of The Circle, sweeping across the great Fifty-ninth Street entrance to the park now dazzles the eye with its bewildering variety, there stretched instead a comparatively open tract wherein a few weeks later a portion of the British army lay encamped. The treacherous Life Guardsman who had indeed attempted to poison Washington in the preceding June, as part of Tryon's infamous plot, had paid the penalty of his life in an open field just east of the Bowery. Even now, as host and guest sat opposite each other at the table, the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army sat in the library of Richmond Hill, at Charlton and Varick Streets, where he had established his summer headquarters.

The cloth had been removed, and in the polished surface of the mahogany table was a faint reflection of slender cut glasses and mellow port wine. No cellars in the city were better stocked with choice private importation of wines than those of Peter Simpson, nor did he stint their use either for himself or his guests. The two were smoking, with occasional recourse to their glasses. They were attired as men of quality of

the period in broadcloth coats, satin waistcoats, ruffled cambric shirts, black satin small clothes, silk stockings and low shoes with large silver buckles, while the wigs of each were properly dressed and powdered.

"And as if this bombastic proclamation of Independence that they made a few weeks ago were not the limit of their folly," Peter was saying, "they must needs think of repulsing the King's army with a beggarly outfit of about one-third as many men, a pack of ragged rapscallions, with not even all of their officers in uniform, and about every other man-jack of them with nothing but an old blunderbuss without a bayonet point. Faugh! What with their paper money, scarce good enough to kindle fires with, and their braggadocio of liberty, these rebels make me sick. 'Tis well Howe has come. This petty rebellion will soon be at an end."

He lifted the decanter and refilled both glasses.

"Jove! This wine is prime," exclaimed his guest, with evident gusto. "Peter, you have the best importation in New York." The host gave a bland gesture, half pride, half dissent.

"If the brand of loyalty," pursued his guest, "were as good as your port, we should have no cause of complaint. But I suppose," he laughed sardonically, "that our fine rebels will soon be hurling the bullets they melted from the statue of King George at Howe's

men, provided they don't run the other way. 'Melted majesty hurled at majesty' has an heroic sound, but damme if I don't think they'll be shooting their own men in the back."

"And be good enough for them," roared Peter. "There's some I'd like to see daylight through, or squirming at the rope's end."

"Time! Time! It won't be long now. Rebels hanged, though hanging's too good for them; estates escheated, Mr. Washington at the tail-end of a cart with the populace hooting after him! Ay, there are good days and fine sights coming." He reached for the decanter and added, "And when they come you may be Mayor of New York. Here's to you, Mr. Mayor, and may your administration be as good as your wine." He set the glass down with a heavy emphasis.

The host nodded his thanks blandly. That Mayoralty bee had buzzed in his ear for many months, and the buzzing was music to him. Then leaning forward he said: "What is this I hear about Mr. Washington getting in a lot more of recruits by this last call he has sent out? I was told only this morning that 'tis like he may get as many men as Howe."

"Pish, man! 'Tis nonsense. A lot of raw farmers are dropping the plow for the blunderbuss in Connecticut and Massachusetts and hereabouts, but what of

it? Awkward clouts, that trip over their own bayonets and don't know the 'retreat' from 'forward, march,' on the bugle. Like enough the only call they'll need will be the 'retreat' at that. I've heard better news than yours, Peter. 'Tis that this Mr. Washington is sick of the whole matter, and if that pottering lot of imbeciles who choose to call themselves the Congress displace him and make Gates the head of the rabble, so much the better for us."

"He has some damned impudent popinjays on his staff," growled Peter, irrelevantly.

"Who? Gates? Oh!" The fumes of smoke and wine were thick, but gentlemen drank deeply in those days, and 'Squire John Elliott, one of the largest landowners of Westchester County, looked carefully at Peter, with a shrewd, inquiring gaze. Then he said, with equal irrelevancy: "Peter, do you know your niece is the most beautiful woman in New York?"

"She's not an unlikely lass," assented Peter.

"It would be a pity," pursued Elliott, "for such a lovely girl to throw herself away on some one not worthy of her. I've been keeping an eye on her for several years myself, and she's bloomed from a little girl into an enchanting woman. She's marriageable, Peter."

The host murmured deeply in his throat.

"Marriageable, and a lot of blades dancing attend-

ance on her, eh! Good looks and a spruce wardrobe, and not enough gold to line their pockets with—these rebels."

"But some of His Majesty's officers have," broke in Peter, loosening his tongue. "Colonel Rutherford caught sight of her the other day on the Battery, and was smitten with the first glance. He sent me letters of introduction and credentials at once and begged for a presentation without delay. The younger son of an Earl, Elliott, and certain to succeed to the title, because his brother is partially paralyzed. Tryon has vouched for him to me, and I don't see how Elizabeth could have a better ——"

"Rutherford!" burst out Elliott. "Why, man, are you demented? I know the blade. One of the worst rakes in the service, a notorious debauchee. Why, a list of his amours would reach to the Haarlem. Seeking an introduction, forsooth! Egad! he must mean worse than usual to go through such a formality."

"Elizabeth is my ward and under my protection, and no man shall have her without my consent," said Peter, with an air of authority.

"And hers?"

"Damme, man! Do you think I'm not master in my own house?"

"Oh, certainly. But even coy maidens have been

known to escape out of windows on dark nights into the arms of willing lovers."

"Well, Elliott, it's evident you're willing enough, but I'll take the chances on Elizabeth risking her neck out of a window for you. You're not exactly what I'd call a Romeo." Peter grinned pleasantly.

"Laugh if you like," said Elliott, hotly, "but I came here to-day to say something, and I'm going to say it, and that is that I'm ready to marry Elizabeth at any time."

A heavy laugh greeted him.

"You, Elliott! You forget that you're my age and a widower with a son nearer Elizabeth's age. Why don't you propose Paul for her instead?"

A dark, angry flush rose under the sallow skin of his guest.

"Your age! And what of that? You're not sweet on the widow Earle yourself, are you? Yes, and she a full twenty years younger than you and a Whig at that. Oh, that goes home, does it? Well, I'm as fit for Elizabeth as you are for the widow Earle, and if you cry quits on that score I'll go further and admit that neither of us is a saint. Be reasonable, Peter. The girl has to marry somebody, and an estate in Westchester, slaves, a chaise and pair, diamonds and silks are better for her than a reprobate Earl and bankrupt strawberry leaves."

"Rutherford will not be a bankrupt, and you know it. The estates are clear. I have spoken with Howe about it."

"Well, if he's the richest peer in England he isn't fit for Elizabeth," said Elliott, virtuously. "And as for Howe, it's the pot vouching for the kettle. Has His Lordship seen her yet?"

"No, but he has asked to do so, and I've invited him to dine with me on Tuesday expressly to meet her."

"Egad!" fairly shouted Elliott, "you've done it now. Even you won't pretend you don't know what Howe is. He'll steal her under your very eyes."

"There'll be no stealing of my ward by any man," said Peter, sternly, "and I don't mind telling you I'll watch you as closely as Lord Howe, or Rutherford, or ——"

"Or Robert Dalrymple," added Elliott.

Peter turned in his chair. The words he muttered between his teeth were never in the prayer book.

"I know of him," pursued Elliot. "Paul fell in with him some time since, and after the manner of young men he discovered his secret. Tell me the truth, Peter. Is she promised to him?"

"Not by me."

"But her own promise?"

"What of her own promise? She's not of age."

"But she will be soon, and then you know, a woman

set on having her own way about the man she wants is more difficult to manage than an unbroken filly. As for that jack-doodle of a Dalrymple, he's one of Mr. Washington's happy family, and from what I hear he's the sort of hothead likely to make trouble in a love affair. You ought to get rid of him."

"I got rid of him the other day," growled Peter. "I ordered him out of this house. I wish that Cunningham had him under lock and key."

"Ah," laughed the other, softly, "one of those quiet little midnight parties he gives, when shutters are ordered closed and there's one less rebel in the morning, would be the very thing for young Lovelace. Given time and enough such parties, and there'd be no more rebellion."

"Well," said Peter, with a round oath, "at least there's no rebellion in my house. I won't have it."

"Well said," heartily assented Elliott. "And now, Peter, just tell me that you'll drop a quiet word in the maid's ear about my wooing, and we'll drink to——"

The door opened, and Elizabeth, a sweet and lovely vision in white, stood in the doorway, the ripeness of the sun lingering about her and the indefinable aroma of magnetic womanhood emanating from her. She seemed to fill the room with light and fragrance.

"Oh, Uncle Peter, I beg your pardon," she said,

"but a messenger from Lord Howe just brought this note, and I told him I'd hand it to you myself."

She gave him a letter. He broke the seal and read the few words it contained with evident pleasure, while Elliott improved the opportunity to bow low over her hand and murmur a compliment.

"Ah," said Peter, suavely, "my dear, you are honored. Lord Howe accepts my invitation for next Tuesday to meet you, and sends you his most respectful compliments. We were just going to drink a toast, and you shall offer it. What say you?"

He filled her glass with his most courtly air, and the two men, both standing and holding out their glasses to the beauty, listened.

Elizabeth's quick-beating heart felt her lover's letter with each throb, where it lay concealed in her closely-laced bodice, and the pulsations hurried.

"My toast!" she said, smilingly. She made a dainty curtsey and said: "Here's to the men who are fighting for the right cause."

CHAPTER III

Mr. Washington

THE city was intolerably hot during August. The lines of demarcation between Whig and Tory daily grew more distinct, and both sides were preparing for the inevitable conflict. A general agitation had seized on all the inhabitants, and there were perpetual alarms, day and night.

General Howe had several weeks previous sent his letter to "Mr. Washington," by Colonel Patterson, only to be informed by Col. Joseph Reed that he knew of no such person and therefore could not receive it. Later Howe had sent Patterson with a letter addressed to "George Washington, Esq., etc., etc., etc.," which the Adjutant-General explained implied everything in the way of a title, and therefore he hoped His Excellency would accept the communication, as it was of the utmost importance. This time Washington himself had received Howe's messenger, in the Kennedy house, No. 1 Broadway, where in full military uniform his stately six feet and three inches towered imposingly above his officers about him, and he had informed Patterson that he could not receive a letter addressed to

him as a private person when it related to public affairs.

After that the interview was polite and perfunctory. Colonel Patterson, at a disadvantage by reason of Washington's attitude, explained with much diplomatic courtesy that Lord Howe and his brother were clothed with great authority by the King, and that they desired above all to arrange the impending difficulties with the colonies peaceably and without bloodshed.

Washington's reply had not been reassuring. He told the Adjutant-General that as Lord Howe's declaration, sent to the governors of Amboy under a flag of truce had been captured and published, it was public property, and that he understood the Howe brothers were only empowered to grant pardons. "And since the people of the colonies," he continued, "have committed no wrongs, we do not desire pardons. It is merely our intention to defend what we know to be our indisputable rights."

Although fairly well equipped for his errand, Patterson became embarrassed under his outward composure. "Your Excellency," he said, "your point of view opens a wide field for argument, and I am not prepared to take up the subject in all its bearings at this meeting. But I confess I feel much solicitude as to the word I shall have to bear to Lord Howe,

and I would not have our interview barren of results."

"I assure you, sir," replied Washington, "that no one can be more anxious to come to an agreement than myself, but though the word you bear may not be pleasing to His Lordship, I trust it will at least be satisfactory as defining our position."

At the end of an extended colloquy, which left both parties exactly where they had been at the beginning, Colonel Patterson had accepted the pressing invitation to stay to lunch, and being presented to all of Washington's staff officers the wine and refreshment of the table somewhat tempered the etiquette that had prevailed, and the conversation had touched on unofficial topics.

When they rose from the table the Adjutant-General took his departure, prefacing it with many graceful thanks for the hospitality extended, and at the last moment as he stood before Washington, attended by Colonel Reed and young Webb, who were to take him down the harbor in their barge, he made a final attempt to win from the unbending chief some acknowledgment to carry to his superiors. "Has Your Excellency no commands to my Lord or General Howe?" he asked, anxiously.

Washington looked at him with the cold self-possession which impressed both friends and enemies, and

replied, calmly: "None, sir, but my particular compliments to both of them."

Washington had left the city not long after this, first sending Mrs. Washington back to Mount Vernon under escort, and the Kennedy house was closed. There was general unrest among all classes, augmented by the fact that there was more sickness than usual, and an epidemic of typhoid fever was threatened. Both Whig and Tory families were going out of town, but, in a conference with Mrs. Fitzmorris who had come over from Philadelphia, Peter announced his determination of remaining. They were in the morning room, Mrs. Hardy, Mrs. Fitzmorris and Peter, and he had been informing the two women of the latest news.

"Amanda here," he said, indicating Mrs. Hardy, "has been frightened to within an inch of her life ever since the *Phœnix* and the *Rose* were fired on from the rebel batteries as they came down from the Narrows. Zounds! Eliza, 'tis almost a pity you were not here with your hysterics too. You missed having a magnificent scare for nothing. Amanda went from one faint into another, and after I'd brought her out of half a dozen or so I went out into town between swoons and took a look around. 'Pon my word the populace was like so many beheaded chickens, the Bowery Road jammed with shrieking women and chil-

dren, most of them carrying bundles bigger than themselves, and some sitting by overturned carts, wringing their hands and imploring the passers-by to help them to escape. I picked up a straw mattress for a little woman with three small children, and asked her what was the matter. She said that she was going to her sister's in the country so that she and her children might escape being butchered. She was an especially helpless creature, and I jested at her fears to such good account that she actually consented to return to her little home. When I came back Amanda had three maids packing trunks, and was trying to get Joe to bury the plate in the yard, and I had another siege. But with it all I must say I missed you, Eliza. For general fits you beat any woman I ever knew."

Mrs. Fitzmorris, Elizabeth's great-aunt, was a woman about ten years Peter's senior, and she had been his particular target for so many years that his remarks were a matter of course. She ignored his last shaft and said:

"I don't know what we'll come to yet. If anything happens in Philadelphia I'll come over here and have you take care of me."

"Do, Eliza," said Peter, fervently.

"Yes; I'd feel safer with you than with any one else. Was Elizabeth frightened?"

"Bess was the only one in the house who kept her

head. No nonsense about her. She was up in the garret with the spy-glass, and when the ships went by the city she was clever enough to guess that they were on their way out to greet the transport of the Admiral. There was another racket in the evening when we heard the firing from Staten Island, and what with horsemen galloping all over town, men running with torches and the streets filled with chaises we made a night of it."

"You know, Peter, 'tis said the rebels say the only way to keep the city from falling entirely into the King's hands is to burn it, and you must admit that there is no doubt we really are in danger."

"Amanda, why is it you cannot understand that we never were so well protected as now? Anchored between Sandy Hook and Staten Island are more ships than Philip II sent to England in 1588. His Majesty has sent about forty thousand men, including some eight thousand Hessians, and it is the intention of Lord Howe and the General to stamp out this insurrection within sixty days. All we have to do is to stay here quietly and let the rebels run."

Mrs. Hardy was constitutionally funereal and, though timid, was also stubborn. She sighed and shook her head.

"Quietly! To hear you talk, Peter, one would think that enough had not happened already to

frighten the whole city. And you forget too that many whom we had counted on for our side have gone over to the rebels. Look at Philip Van Cortlandt, destroying a major's commission sent him by Governor Tryon, and accepting the rank of colonel under Mr. Washington instead. And look at the Schuylers and the Livingstons, the Morrises and the Jays and scores of others whom one would have thought would be of us, all gone with the insurrection. 'Tis more than the beggarly handful you try to make out, Peter. Many of the best and most aristocratic families have turned rebel."

"So much the worse for them," said Peter, angrily, for she had touched on a sore point. "'Twere well for them if their principles were as good as their blood. It will be all the same for them in the end, disgrace, confiscated estates, ruined fortunes. Ay, even if they were of the nobility, an example would be made of them."

Mrs. Hardy's colorless, uninflected voice went on as if she had not heard. "As for the young men, they enlist with the rebels by companies and brigades. There are the Dalrymples, the father and two sons. They lived in Flatbush, not far from David Clarkson's summer residence, and they have all gone over to New Brunswick in Jersey, and Mrs. Van Horne and the girls went with them. Don't you remember Mrs. Dalrymple, Eliza?"

"Of course I do; she was Sarah Folliott. She and my mother were in school together. I had lost sight of them."

"They haven't lost sight of us, at least Robert hasn't. He is in love with Elizabeth."

Mrs. Fitzmorris cried out and turned on Peter. "What! Do you mean to say that you have permitted ——?"

Mrs. Hardy broke in and continued, ticking off her words regularly:

"And Elizabeth is in love with him."

"Under your eye, Peter!" gasped Mrs. Fitzmorris. "I wouldn't have believed it."

Of the two it were hard to tell which was the more worldly-wise. It would have been a toss-up between them any day to see which could the more surely adjust a material advantage, and both were so fond of Elizabeth that she was the principal bone of contention between them. It had long been mutually agreed that she was to make a brilliant match, one worthy of her beauty and her natural gifts, and that she should be a society leader second to none. But, despite her popularity, it had for some time been evident that Elizabeth, with her spirits and her spontaneity, was not likely to make close calculations with ambition, and it was the secret fear of both that she might take matters into her own hands. The truth was that the

sentiment between Robert and Elizabeth had grown under Peter's observation so naturally that he did not know it until too late. Almost simultaneous then had been his discovery of their affection and of the adherence of the Dalrymples to what was known among the Tories as the rebel cause. Previous to that they had all been on friendly terms, but in the crucible of that formative period, men sometimes parted friends at night and crossed the street the next morning to avoid meeting; sons went down the street and enlisted and came back to the paternal roof to be disinherited; brothers were parted; suspicions of disloyalty ramified through large family connections until they split in feuds. Robert's frank and manly acknowledgment to Peter had only added fuel to the flame of his wrath because His Majesty had lost several useful adherents in the Dalrymples, and he had thus far succeeded in keeping the secret from Mrs. Fitzmorris, knowing what manner of condemnation she would mete out to him.

He made the best of it now. "It's nothing but a temporary affair, Eliza," he said, "and it's virtually over now. There's nothing to fear from it. I took the matter in hand in good time and settled it. He is forbidden the house, and I laid down the law to Bess about it. She'll do no marrying without my consent, and she knows it."

Mrs. Fitzmorris did not look convinced. "There's been half a dozen elopements in Philadelphia lately," she said, "and all from the best families too. It is getting to be more and more the fashion for a girl to climb out of a window and go galloping away on horseback with her lover and a friend or two to the nearest parson. The last time I saw this young fellow, about two years ago, he was getting handsome. He'll be comfortably well off some day I suppose."

"How can he be comfortably well off when they've lost all they had?" asked Peter, testily. "His Majesty's men are already set up in Clarkson's house, and they made short work of his imported wines in the cellars, and a company of Hessians are quartered in the Dalrymple house. It's true they own some property on the Bowery Road, but as they've gone over into Jersey they have probably seen the last of it."

"And are you sure that you have seen the last of the affair between Robert and Elizabeth?" asked Mrs. Fitzmorris.

"He was here only a few days ago," said Mrs. Hardy.

"Yes, he was here, and he was ordered out by me," said Peter. "I sent Bess to her room and had a talk with her afterwards."

"Well, between you, I must say you are managing

things in first-rate style. You must have been very watchful, Amanda."

"It happened I had gone to spend the day with the Van Dusens over in Flatbush, and Peter was temporarily absent from the house, and Robert boldly walked in in broad daylight and did his love-making. Perhaps even you might not have been able to prevent it, Eliza."

"Well, it must be prevented in the future. It's all very well to say that because a young fellow is forbidden the house and the girl lectured, and all that kind of thing, that an affair is ended. For my part I don't believe at all that it has had any other effect than to help matters along. But of course it will have to be stopped. It is all folly for a girl like Elizabeth, with a train of admirers, to think of throwing herself away."

"You're quite right, Eliza, and while you're here I wish you'd take a hand in things and do all you can to bring the girl to a different mind," said Peter. "I suppose it might be as well for the present for you to affect not to know about Dalrymple."

"Oh, that's easy enough. But she's headstrong, Peter, you know it's in the blood, and it may take more than mere argument to break off this unfortunate affair."

"Yes, she's headstrong, as you say, Eliza. She has

our blood in her, but she's young, and she can be controlled."

"Were you controlled when you were young?" asked Mrs. Hardy.

"Probably more than you were," replied Peter, forgetting his breeding in this comfortable family exchange of courtesies.

"I judge so by the result," said Mrs. Hardy, significantly. Mrs. Fitzmorris made the thorn-like crackling in her throat that always irritated Peter beyond endurance. He knew he was in a bad way if she laughed.

"My dear Amanda," he said, "you should remember that I had not the advantage of your training and of your sex."

"I'll do what I can, Peter," said Mrs. Fitzmorris. "The most important part just now is to keep this young fellow from seeing her."

"That's all right. He's out of the city, and if all goes well it will be a long time before any of the rebels who have left will venture to return." He got up and saying: "I'll have just time to see De Lancey before dinner," he left the room. The two women were in the full tide of a discussion of Elizabeth's matrimonial future when the subject of their remarks entered, looking as fresh and sweet as a June rose. Her lovely and innocent aspect appealed strongly to

Mrs. Fitzmorris' commercial instincts. In deference to a long, sly look Mrs. Hardy left the room, and Elizabeth was alone with her great-aunt to battle as best she might against worldly interest with the world-old weapon of love.

CHAPTER IV

Leave Hope Behind

EARLY on the morning of the twenty-seventh of August, 1776, a solitary horseman was riding rapidly towards the American lines on Long Island. The moon was almost full, and it was a clear, glorious summer night, the air warm and lambent, and rich earth-vapors rising from the crushed foliage under the horse's hoofs.

The rider was passing through the densely wooded hills that stretched between Brooklyn and the flat, open country beyond, and as he rode out from a dense shadow and stooped in the moonlight to tighten his saddle girth, his face could be plainly seen. Had Elizabeth Windham been there the horseman's journey might have been interrupted for a few minutes by the dalliance of love, for it was the face of her lover.

But at this hour, and on this mission, Robert thought not of the woman he loved, for peril to the cause was threatened and every hour brought the danger nearer. He had ridden away from Washington charged with final orders to Putnam, and even now the pale, serious face of the Commander-in-Chief appeared before his

mind's vision, and he seemed to hear again his parting words: "And see to it that the Bedford and Jamaica passes are well guarded, for they will probably try to force an entrance through them."

Long Island bristled with bayonets. The British contemplated a coup de main, and with their powerful fleet and army, their fully equipped troops and experienced generals, it was their intention to end the war with this one blow. Lord Howe had said at Halifax: "Peace will be made within ten days after my arrival." More than fifteen thousand British troops were encamped on the western end of Long Island, under Clinton, Cornwallis and Howe, and regiments of the hated Hessians, under De Heister and Knyphausen, supported them. Howe's ships of war in the bay had so terrified the inhabitants of New York City that many Whig families were fleeing to the country under cover of the night, while Tory leaders were banqueting in honor of the foe. Even while her lover proceeded on his errand, Elizabeth was wakened from slumber by echoes of the hilarity in her uncle's dining-room. For a moment she lay looking at the shafts of moonlight that streamed in through the thin curtains, then rising she went to the window and, kneeling there a picture of purity in her white gown, she poured out her virgin soul in supplications for the safety of the man she loved and the triumph of the American cause.

Much did that cause need her prayers. Not more than some eight thousand men did Washington have on Long Island with which to encounter the trained soldiers of the King, for although many new troops had enlisted there had also been desertions by the wholesale, and some regiments had been decimated by the expiration of the term of enlistment. In addition, sickness had raged in the army all summer, and with the ill and wounded, the inefficient equipment of many troops and the necessary dispersion of the men over the land defenses from Brooklyn to the Haarlem, the Continental army had never needed the Lord of Hosts on their side more than at the present hour.

Washington had in the field, as his generals, Putnam, in chief command of Long Island; Sullivan, Lord Stirling and a number of minor officers. On these and on the troops under them, depended the fate of the city of New York, for the report had been widely circulated that the British intended to ravage Long Island, burn New York and take their army to the retreat of the Highlands, whence they could communicate with Carleton on Lake Champlain and control the country.

As Robert rode towards Putnam the rhythm of his horse's hoofs wove into the sombre texture of his thoughts, until the regular cadence of the hoof-beats became like a deep minor chord, with the strophe and

antistrophe of consciousness striving for the mastery, and ever a recurrent, haunting theme, elusive and sinister, that foreboded something he could not define, until he straightened himself in the saddle and struck the horse sharply with his whip from sheer irritation. Unused to such treatment, the animal leaped forward.

"There! There!" said Robert, soothingly. "Don't be alarmed, old boy. I don't like the looks of things, that's all, but we'll pull out all right."

At three o'clock that morning, in the last velvety darkness of the night before dawn, he stood before Putnam and delivered his message. The General had not slept for thirty-six hours, and by the flickering candle-light in his tent he looked pale and haggard.

"The passes are guarded as well as possible under the circumstances," he said, briefly, "but, great God, what can I do with a handful! I could spare only about twenty-five hundred men for all the passes. Even our posts are about five miles apart in places, and I have no more men to detail for such duty. Does His Excellency think we have two men to every one of the British?"

Robert opened his mouth to reply, but ere he could speak the sound of swift hoofs beating the earth outside broke upon his ears, and on the instant, followed by two of Putnam's staff, panting and anxious, a colonel of artillery flung himself into the tent and,

saluting, said: "Sir, the pickets at the lower pass, south of Greenwood, have been driven in and the British are advancing."

"Send Stirling to me," said Putnam, hastily.

As an aide departed, post-haste, Robert's arm was caught and he was drawn to one side by a strong grasp.

"Robert! You here!"

"Tallmadge! I had not expected to see you."

"It's probably the devil's own luck that I'm here, but there'll be merry piping before we're done with this night's work, and we might as well see it through."

"I was not ordered to return at once," said Robert. "Shall we go on together?"

"By all means," replied Tallmadge. "Listen to that!"

There was a din of excitement throughout the camp, as Putnam's orders were quickly delivered, and within the half hour the two men were riding towards the pass in company with the Maryland and Delaware troops, under Brigadier-General Lord Stirling to check the enemy. Morning was several hours advanced when they were in position to fight, and until sundown of that fateful day the historic battle of Long Island raged.

The result of the contest against such overwhelm-

ing numbers might have been foreseen. Stirling found himself confronted with a large division of the British army under General Grant, while the whole force of the Continental army was disposed over a line fully five miles in extent, with odds of nearly three to one and Howe's powerful ships of war in the bay to threaten.

Robert and Tallmadge were early in the foremost of the fighting, but just before noon they became separated. But, as they rode on in the early morning twilight of the day, they had conversed together.

"And how is Nathan?" Robert had asked.

"Hale is in New York, sick," replied Tallmadge. "He was fretting a few days ago when I saw him because he was not fit for active service, but he'll be heard from soon again."

"Surely," said Robert. "He has the heart of a hero in him, and he will yet make a name for himself." After a moment's silence he added: "It seems ages since we were frollicking in Yale, doesn't it?"

"Yes," said Tallmadge. "Times like these can make even an unregenerate devil realize that 'a thousand years are as a day in His sight.'"

"Well," responded Robert, more lightly: "just so I never have to realize that a day is as a thousand years, like our unfortunate prisoners in the hands of the British. Their prisons are hell-holes."

It was when day had fairly broken and shafts of sunlight flashed through the wooded path that Tallmadge drew his horse a little nearer to Robert's and said: "It's light enough for you to read this now, Rob. She slipped it to me on the Battery several days ago when her uncle was not looking." He pressed a letter into Robert's hand.

The young man uttered an exclamation as Tallmadge rode forward and left him alone. When Robert rejoined him again his face was softened but serious, and it was in a voice vibrant with feeling that he said:

"Tallmadge, they're worth fighting for—our women."

"Yes, they are, God bless them," replied Tallmadge. They rode in silence for some time.

When the heat of that noonday beat down upon them the two friends had not seen each other for hours. The unequal contest was raging hotly. The attack of the British was severe, and early in the day the troops on the American left, after suffering heavy losses, broke and fled towards the lines at Brooklyn, many being taken prisoners, and a number escaping into the woods. Sullivan, trapped between the burned bridge at Gowanus Creek cutting off his retreat, and a forest of bayonets in front, fought his way into a corn-field, where he was captured by a party of German grenadiers.

Suffering from the excessive heat of the day, Robert found himself about noon near the commanding general, who was anxiously watching events from the only fortification he was able to man, the wooded height now known as Battle Hill, in Greenwood Cemetery. Here two cannon, all he had, were mounted so as to command the road, and the left of his troops rested behind these guns. His right was almost on the Bay, and Colonel At Lee and Colonel Kiechlin commanded the centre.

"Sir, how goes it?" asked Robert.

"Badly, I fear," replied Stirling. "Colonel Kiechlin has just sent me word that Sullivan has had desperate fighting on Mount Prospect, and has lost many men. The Connecticut troops have burned the bridge, and my own men are almost the only ones left on the field that have not been thrown into confusion."

As he finished speaking an aide dashed up and nearly went over his horse's head as he suddenly reined in and said: "Sir, General Sullivan is taken prisoner, and his men have been cut to pieces by a bayonet charge under Clinton."

His last words were all but drowned in the roar of the cannon as they belched forth against the approaching troops in the roadway swept by the guns. The British had been gallantly held back by hard fighting as they made their way through the woods, but by

sheer force of superior numbers they had pushed ahead. As they came into sight they presented a brilliant appearance in the green setting of the landscape; the scarlet coats of Cornwallis' favorite regiment, the flashing brass helmets of the Hessians, the black outfittings of the Royal Guards and the kilted plaids of the Highlanders. As they emerged from a clearing in the woods and re-formed their lines beyond the road, it was evident that a sharp conflict was at hand, for Cornwallis himself, riding a magnificent charger, led the attack.

The smoke of the guns had not died away when their volley was answered by the shriek of shells, and Stirling's horse was shot under him.

"Take mine, sir," said Robert, dismounting. "No, do not hesitate, and do not expose yourself needlessly." His words were unheeded, for Stirling was already in the saddle and riding down the line in full range of the firing. A shell exploded a few feet away from Robert, and a young fellow threw up his arms and fell from his saddle. Robert ran to him.

"I'm done for," gasped the man, the blood spurting from his mouth. "Tell mother ——" he choked, rolled over and lay still. Robert gave one look, then leaped into the saddle and spurred after Stirling.

For four hours one of the most spirited battles of the Revolution raged, and then Stirling's gallant and

stubborn resistance ended in defeat. His troops bore the brunt of the fighting that day, and they behaved with splendid spirit, but the odds were against them, and when word was brought that the main body of the British was approaching his flank and rear, Stirling gave the order to retreat. As the bugle sounded the fateful notes Robert rode up to the General and said, "Sir, the bridge is burning and the tide is rising. There is nothing open now but the creek, and a detachment of grenadiers coming down the Port Road will soon shut that off."

Stirling beckoned to Colonel At Lee, who came up and saluted. "Where is Graham?" asked the General.

"Killed, sir."

"Morton?"

"Wounded and taken prisoner."

"Then go yourself and see to it that the Delaware troops and half the Maryland men retreat across the creek with the German and Hessian prisoners we have captured, and I will stay here with the rest of the troops and try to hold Cornwallis in check until we save as many as possible. Lose no time."

As the Colonel spurred away Robert said: "I'll stay with you, sir."

"No; go while you can," replied Stirling. "God knows if we can hold the creek long."

As he spoke a battalion of redcoats rushed out from

a wooded knoll, and with a shout closed in upon the General. Robert flung himself in front and warded off a sabre blow that threatened to cleave Stirling's head. A company of Marylanders came on the run, and a fierce hand-to-hand contest ensued. In the thick of the fight Robert was early disarmed, and was left single-handed to engage his antagonists. Stout of limb and strong in wind, he fought like a young giant, and by virtue of his splendid physical strength saved himself, for some time. At last, exhausted, he found himself overpowered by numbers and was on the point of sinking when his would-be captors were scattered by a charge of light horse, and though he was almost brained by the trampling hoofs, he escaped and remounted. From that on the fighting was desperate, the gallant Marylanders who remained with Stirling giving battle with the courage of despair, for all knew now that the day was lost. The retreat had become a disorganized rout. The dead and dying strewed the field in every direction, and as successive British troops came up prisoners were taken in squads, and were driven back to the enemy's lines at the point of the bayonet.

Furious skirmishes, rather than regular fighting in battle array, characterized the entire engagement, and these irregular but bloody frays were redoubled as the American troops steadily covered their retreat to the

creek and marsh. Every foot of ground was hotly contested, and the field was strewn with war's terrible human débris as the Continentals continued to withdraw. The end came when Stirling had almost reached the creek himself, the troops who had remained with him having saved most of their comrades who had preceded them. Robert had not been far from him at any time, and when he found himself and the General unexpectedly surrounded by a cordon he desperately attempted to cut his way through. In vain. He saw Stirling unhorsed, felt a bullet cut his own right arm, and, as it dangled, he lifted his sword with his left and beat the flat of it so heavily on the head of a red-coated Colonel that he fell, but even as he would have run him through a Lieutenant felled him to the earth with the butt of his musket, and he rolled unconscious on the sward.

Around his senseless form the strife continued; the creek now a confused mass of horses and men, prisoners, the dead, wounded and dying; and the trampling of hoofs, the heartrending cries of the helpless as terrified and snorting horses trampled them in the mud, the hoarse shouting of commands, arose unheeded by him. The brave Stirling was a prisoner, and as De Heister, to whom he had surrendered, escorted him to the British lines and he saw Robert's pale, upturned face, his eyes filled with tears and he averted his head.

How long Robert lay as one dead on the field he did not know for days. When he recovered consciousness a heavy rain was falling, but the cool drops felt refreshing on his hot cheeks. With the first movement he made sharp pains shot through him and every joint creaked in agony.

"Lie still there," growled a heavy voice, and the words were emphasized by a prod from a stout boot. A faint groan broke from Robert's fevered lips, and his captor laughed. "Another white-livered rebel," he said. Robert was dimly conscious of other white and drawn faces around him; then he lapsed into insensibility again. For thirty-six hours after the battle the delirium of fever ravaged him; then, on the evening of the second day, when he roused again, he heard the sound of oars and knew that they were on the water. They approached a huge, black, forbidding hulk, and with oaths and kicks Robert and his unfortunate fellow prisoners were hustled on board and driven between decks so rapidly that he had no time in his dazed condition to know where they were or what vessel it was. Foul air and a scene of misery greeted him as he gazed around.

"Where am I?" he gasped, faintly.

A man with benignant eyes, but haggard to a fearful degree, said kindly:

"Cheer up, lad; you are with friends, and God has not deserted us."

A laugh that chilled Robert sounded in his ears, and he shrank away from the human wreck that plucked him by the sleeve, as he pointed up to the closed hatches.

"Leave hope behind you," he said. "This is the *Jersey*."

CHAPTER V

A Flag of Truce

WASHINGTON saw the last slaughter of the Continental troops from the fortifications on Brooklyn Heights, and the spectacle destroyed his usual serenity and drew forth exclamations of grief. After being assured by the reports brought to him of the disposition of the British that New York City was not to be attacked, he had crossed the river and was on the scene of action at the last, and when the troops, caught in the trap between the two lines of the enemy that completely hemmed them in, were forced back and slowly fought their way over the creek and across the swamp ground to the river, the tense anxiety with which he had watched the action gave way and he cried out: "My God! What brave men must I lose to-day!"

"Sir," said Mifflin, "'tis bad enough, but many are being spared. We will have enough to do to get away from here without losing more."

He was right. Had not the elements favored the Continentals after the sore loss of that battle the sluggish Howe might have fallen upon them with even

worse result, but the exceedingly heavy rain that fell without intermission for about forty-eight hours afterwards was the salvation of the army. Howe, as ever, was indolent and inactive, and paid no attention to the urging of Cornwallis for another engagement, and Washington, knowing only too well that his men were in no condition for another encounter with the enemy, did the only thing possible under the circumstances and withdrew. On the evening of the second day, leaving camp-fires burning to deceive the British sentries, the Continental troops, defeated, worn out and soaked to the skin, silently retreated in the mud and darkness and crossed to New York. Mifflin, with six picked regiments to man the redoubt, was the last one, save Washington himself, to leave Brooklyn Heights, and on the thirtieth of August the East River lay between the two armies.

The days that elapsed before the memorable retreat to Haarlem were filled with anxious consultation. Washington's chief generals and staff officers were a gallant company of men nearly all young, inexperienced and full of ardor and daring. Had not the Chief himself been the balance wheel nothing but disaster could have come to our arms. It is true that he lacked a certain magnetism, that his accomplishments were not evenly balanced in all directions, and that an almost stoical coldness usually veiled the heat of a tem-

perament that had furnace fires banked in its innermost recesses, but with the prospective of time upon all of these things it is easy to understand that whatever may be pointed out as a defect was in reality an element of strength that enabled him to command even the more influence.

In reality, Washington was not less human than the youngest and most impulsive of his officers, and they all knew it, but he was the one man of the time who was by nature typical of the dignity of the unborn republic, and Knox, who drank right well with him, Reed and Mifflin, who shared a liking for cards with him, Stirling who, like Washington, was passionately fond of a good horse, and all the rest of that martial band knew that no matter how good a comrade the Commander-in-Chief might be in his hours of relaxation, no matter how intimately their likes and dislikes might touch, he was none the less their head and master.

Most of them were quite young enough to listen to the voice of authority for several years more, for age had not chilled the blood of any. Greene was thirty-four and warm and impetuous by nature; Mifflin, about the same age, had good judgment and ability; Knox, brave but inexperienced, was twenty-six and was in command of the artillery, with Alexander Hamilton, only nineteen, on his staff. Reed was

thirty-five, Sullivan thirty-six and Heath thirty-nine; Parsons and Wadsworth were two fine young officers commanding Connecticut men; Scott and Spencer were in the forties; Wolcott was about the only one who could be called a statesman, and he was fifty; Stirling was the same age, and, with the exception of Washington, was the general of the finest military appearance in the army. The handsome and graceful presence of the lamented Montgomery was already a tradition, where his brother officers had vied with each other in their admiration of his magnetic and winning manners, his social talents and his princely bearing. Since he had fallen there was no one to fill his place. Putnam was the oldest of the company; he was fifty-six, experienced and cool-headed, and had for his aide-de-camp Aaron Burr, who had reached the mature age of twenty, the same as Aaron Ogden, while Nicholas Fish was the youngest of the striplings, a youth of eighteen.

To Tallmadge had fallen the heavy task of sending word to Elizabeth of Robert's capture and incarceration. He did not dare to attempt to enter Peter's house, and he did not see her, but as soon as the Continentals were in New York he had contrived to have a letter reach her through her faithful maid, Julia. It happened that but a short time after she received the news Colonel Rutherford called. The young Brit-

ish officer had been entertained at Peter's hospitable board only a few days before the battle, and the impression which had been made on him by his first view of Elizabeth's beauty was greatly heightened by closer contact with her social graces and her womanly poise. His previous inquiries had informed him that another and a favored suitor was in the field, but he had wooed too many women successfully to pay more than passing attention to a rival. He was thoroughly determined to win her at any cost, and though he had flattered himself that the marriage yoke should never rest on his neck, he found himself inadvertently contemplating matrimony, the latter reflection possibly induced by Peter's straightforward statement that he would let daylight through any man who sought his niece otherwise.

When he reached Peter's house on a sunny September evening he was apparently a suitor who might win the heart of any girl, a handsome and dashing man, well set off in his uniform. His self-confidence seemed to be justified. He was a favorite of Howe, and as one of his staff officers, was said to have considerable influence. Peter, despite his violent opposition to Robert as Elizabeth's lover, was so fond of her that her outburst of grief on hearing the news of his confinement on the *Jersey* had shaken him considerably. In vain he tried to console her; she had only given way to

fresh passion, and had wept in his arms until he felt as if he himself were on the verge of distraction. The previous night she had scarcely slept at all, and had moaned and tossed until morning, when she fell into a heavy sleep that lasted until nearly noon. When she rose she was calm but apathetic, and Peter noted with a heavy heart her paleness and the dark rings under her eyes. She took her place at the dinner table and resumed her usual household duties, but during the long afternoon she silently bent over her embroidery frame, and replied only in a brief and absent-minded manner to Peter's attempts to draw her into conversation.

So, when Rutherford came, Peter greeted him gladly and engaged him privately before he saw Elizabeth. "So do all you can to quiet her," he said at the last. "I'm afraid the poor girl will be ill with all this worrying. Not but what I'm sure she'll be sensible enough to get over this folly in the end, but still when a woman has her heart set on a man, why, it's set for the time being, and that's all there is to it. Bess is a fine girl, and though I've no use for this damned jackanapes that's been snooping around her, I can't bear to see her cry. Egad, Rutherford, I always was a fool about a woman's tears."

"Your heart does you credit, sir," replied Rutherford, secretly laughing at Peter's softness. "I think

you need give yourself no uneasiness. This Mr. Dalrymple is safe enough for the present, and it isn't so likely that he'll get off the *Jersey* in a hurry."

"No, of course not, but that's the rub. She's fretting the life out of her for that very reason. I'm as weak as a baby, sir, trying to comfort her without cussing him and saying I'm glad that one more rebel's taken care of. D'ye see it's a hard situation for a man of my principles?"

"I do, sir, but it's a situation that can be handled. I'll tell Miss Elizabeth that it will probably be no time at all until her sweetheart is freed. 'Tis as easy to say that as anything, and as for the likelihood of it, why, that's another matter."

"Colonel, you're a man of expedients. Damme, sir, I like your way. Go in there and talk with her, and earn my everlasting gratitude if you can put a stop to some of this weeping. Come this way first and have something." He led the way to the dining-room and seated his guest. "With matters the way they are one has more to think of than one renegade more or less. This city is not a safe place to live in while the rebels control it. We are at their mercy, sir, and this confusion worse confounded is as bad as waiting for the judgment day, with the streets full of people flying to the country, and half the King's adherents with their coaches and horses standing before

their doors day and night. For my part I shall not stay here unless Howe takes possession. Do you know of His Lordship's intentions?"

"We are not yet informed, but it is more than likely that we shall enter and give Mr. Washington an opportunity to retire to the hills above."

"Ah, he'll be glad enough to retire, I'll warrant. Good luck to you, Rutherford, with Elizabeth. Promise to get that rascal off to-morrow if necessary."

An hour later Rutherford was taking his leave. Elizabeth's cheeks were softly flushed, and in her soft eyes lay a sweet, tender expression that Rutherford knew well was not for him, but he had made a bold move to gain an audience, and as her hand lay in his for a moment he felt that he had risked wisely.

"And I do assure you, Miss Windham," he was saying, "that you have distressed yourself quite unnecessarily over these bogey tales of hardship, starvation, sickness, and all that sort of thing. Why, my dear young lady, prisoners are prisoners the world over, and they are not fed on ortolans and stuffed partridges."

"Oh, Colonel Rutherford, you know that I am not so foolish as to think anything of the kind. It is not that—at least, that is not all. It is, it is——" Her voice trailed off into an uncertain note, and her eyelids quivered. Rutherford felt her hand flutter, then

she withdrew it and he dared not take it again, much as he longed to do so.

"It is—what?" he asked.

She was silent for fully a moment. Then she lifted her eyes and looked at him with a mournful directness. "Have you ever been in prison?" she asked.

"I have not, and I count myself unfortunate if that is a merit in your eyes. I would be willing to go there at any time if I might have the honor of being the object of your solicitude."

"You forget that Lieutenant Dalrymple is a prisoner, not for my sake but for the sake of his country," replied Elizabeth, her cheeks warmly reddened now, and her eyes lit by a brighter flame. Her directness was unexpected to Rutherford, who had not counted on such a reply, but he said quickly: "Pardon me if I forgot, Miss Windham. I would tell you the reason why I forgot also if I dared, but I will not tax your forgiveness so far, even though I had the best reason in the world."

His voice was smooth, his manner insinuating and deferential. He noted a slight change in her attitude, and quickly followed up the advantage he knew he had obtained. "Surely no man could promise more than I have to you. I have told you that I will at once look into the matter of Lieutenant Dalrymple's detention on the *Jersey*, and see that his case is taken

up through the proper channels as soon as possible. I have explained to you that it is impossible that I myself should have anything to do with his exchange or with any detail of his life on board, but I shall bring to bear whatever influence I have in certain quarters, and in the meantime I beg of you to compose yourself and dismiss these silly stories about bad food and worse treatment from your mind. Miss Windham, may I hope to be made welcome again soon?"

"My uncle's friends are always welcome in his house."

"And *your* friends, Miss Windham?"

"My friends! *My* friends! Ah, Colonel Rutherford, I have my friends, but never yet have I had one wearing the uniform you wear."

"Then why not let me be the first? Is the color of a man's coat the sign of his morality, his character?"

"While this war lasts it is a sign of his loyalty, and my friends are those who are fighting for our rights, for our principles. You are not on the right side, Colonel Rutherford."

"If I am wrong you can teach me better. Surely you must admit it is not my fault that your tea is taxed. Come, Miss Windham, you are a stanch and loyal Whig, and I am an humble servant of His Majesty, and this war will not be fought out by either you or

me, so let us cry quits to hostility, and be amiable friends under a flag of truce."

"Fighting does not continue under a flag of truce, and you will be fighting, while I, as a woman, will be at home. You see one of us is a soldier and the other a non-combatant."

"I will surrender myself a prisoner at any time you say the word," replied Rutherford. He had moved a step nearer her and was looking straight down into her eyes. His tone and manner left no doubt of the intensity with which the words were uttered. But one word in the sentence had struck the tense chord in Elizabeth's heart, and it vibrated painfully as she replied: "Sir, there are too many prisoners now."

The sadness of her tone went home even to Rutherford's inner consciousness, and with a sincerity that a moment later astonished him he said: "There shall be one less if I can bring it about." He bowed low over her hand, murmured an adieu and was gone before he fully realized what he had said. Then he laughed to himself, and inwardly swore that Robert Dalrymple should never leave the *Jersey* alive.

A little more than a week from that day Washington's army was moving to the Haarlem, and so closely did Howe's troops follow that the Continentals were scarcely out of sight before the redcoats entered the city they were to occupy for more than seven years.

Washington was compelled to evacuate, for Howe at last was crossing the East River, and before he could effect the landing of his entire forces the ragged Americans quietly marched northward to the hills, as Peter had predicted. It was one of the most picturesque and most pathetic sights ever written in history, and the accounts left of it fire the imagination beyond words.

New York City was then but a straggling town. Murray Hill, the Incleburg, was three miles from the city limits, and there were country places along the East River as far north as the streets of the seventies. In that wide, expanding V-shape stretching between the two rivers beyond The Fields there gradually spread out forests and broken areas whose tangled paths and hidden recesses were known only to experienced guides. Westward to the Hudson the forest thickened, and there was but one good cross road on the island in the upper part, leading diagonally to the famous Apthorpe house, at Ninety-first Street. But it was necessary to go much farther in the hills of the Haarlem than what is now Ninety-first Street, and routes and paths were eagerly discussed, and, strangely enough, almost with acrimony. When under cover of the night and as silently as possible the troops wended their way in the darkness through the woods they made a strange, parti-colored multitude. Theirs was a

motley garb, for the poverty of the patriots was very great. There were Marylanders in green hunting shirts with leggins. In Connecticut old red coats that had been used in the French wars had been taken from their retirement in the garret and made to do duty with low breeches and triangular laced hats. Delaware troops were in dark blue coats with red facings; Jersey riflemen tramped through the mud in short red coats and striped trousers, while others of their own men trudged by them in short blue coats, old leather breeches, light blue stockings, shoes with brass buckles and hats bound in yellow, and had it not been for their rifles they might have been taken for a band of countrymen in town on a market holiday.

The Pennsylvania regiments were in all the colors of the rainbow. They wore brown coats faced with buff, blue coats faced with red, brown coats faced with white and studded with great pewter buttons; buckskin breeches and black cocked hats with white tape bindings. Truth to tell, some companies were without coats, and the men had but one shirt and that so scant of cloth that they had been nicknamed "the shoddy shirts" by the Virginians who were quite the dandies of the army in white smock-frocks, furbelowed with ruffles at the neck, elbows and wrists, black stocks, hair in queues, and round-topped, broad-brimmed black hats.

Later the Light Dragoons were uniformed in blue coats faced with red or brown coats faced with green. Washington's guards had a handsome uniform of blue coats faced with the Continental buff, red waistcoats, buckskin breeches, black felt hats bound with red tape, and bayonet and body-belt of white. The green hunting shirts were "the mortal aversion of the redcoats." The British hated the sight of them, and they were seen everywhere, with breeches of the same cloth bound gaiter fashion about the legs. And so this strangely attired army retreated through the forests of New York City, searched in the darkness for paths where now great avenues roll northward, dragged cannon through the mire of Fifth Avenue, broke away branches of trees as their horses poked their noses ahead in the thicket where Grant's tomb now stands, and all along the way where great towering modern apartment houses glitter at night, up the Broadway that is a river of light from dusk to long after midnight, up through marshes now crowned by the palaces of wealth, Washington's army slowly and with difficulty withdrew before the British, feeling a way through the forest by the light of the stars. Of the guides who chose routes, Aaron Burr was one of the best. He was good in obscure ways then and later, and he was of decided assistance in piloting the troops through the woods.

Putnam was the last to leave. And surely every one knows how that loyal and most excellent woman, Mrs. Robert Murray, whose loyalty was even better than the grammar of her famous son, Lindley Murray, detained Clinton, Howe, Tryon and their staffs with her wine and wit and jesting conversation until General Putnam got all his men by, passing her house not two miles away! Had she not done so a large force of Hessians and British would have cut off their retreat and captured his command. It is well a saying in history that she saved that part of the army. And 'tis scarcely a miracle, for when a man looks over a wine glass into a woman's eyes he can forget more than his enemies.

CHAPTER VI

Alas! We Have None

LATE in September Washington sat alone one morning in the library of the house of Col. Roger Morris, his old friend and comrade on the field of the Monongahela. He was in undress uniform, and his features wore their usual serene and impassive expression, but his soul was sick within him, for although the skilful retreat he had conducted after the battle of Long Island remains the admiration of military men to this day, enough had happened since to test the quality of any one. The Continentals were encamped on the heights of the Haarlem, and New York City was in the hands of the British.

The air was warm and wine-like, but its fragrance was unheeded by Washington as he gazed out of the window towards the Hudson, where a blue haze hovered over the Jersey hills. The table before him was covered with maps, papers, letters and memoranda, and the purport of their information, meagre as it was, had deepened his anxiety for the cause.

He was aroused from his thoughts by the entrance of his orderly, who said: "Your Excellency, a young lady is without who wishes to see you."

"It is impossible. Give her my excuses. My orders are imperative to-day to see no one except the names I have given you."

The orderly withdrew. Washington, who had not moved or turned his head, faced a newcomer quickly and with a look of surprise, for it was Tallmadge, who, saluting at a respectful distance, said: "General, I beg pardon for violating your orders, but the lady who wishes to see you is Miss Windham. Her betrothed, Lieutenant Dalrymple, saved General Stirling's life at the battle, and he was captured and made prisoner on board the *Jersey*. Nathan spoke of him the night before ——" His voice shook.

Washington's face changed. "Show her in," he said.

Elizabeth had wept much in these unhappy weeks, but at seventeen even tears are not fatal to beauty housed in a strong body and reinforced by a spirit impossible to break. The stolen visit to Washington, under Tallmadge's escort, the excitement of the meeting and the agitation caused by her mission, sent the blood to her cheeks and kindled a brighter flame in her eyes. She curtsied deeply, the roses in her face mantling and little waves of her dark hair tumbling about her white neck. Washington never viewed feminine loveliness unmoved, and, deeply touched by her charms, he took her hand in both of his and said:

"My dear young lady, pray have this chair and be comfortable. I have the honor of addressing Miss Windham, who is a friend to our cause, and I shall not make you a prisoner, but"—he smiled, "if you will exchange your uncle for yourself, I promise to keep him within our lines indefinitely."

"Oh, sir!" cried Elizabeth, her voice vibrating with painful emotion, "I know that my uncle is your enemy and aids the foe, but though I cannot give him up to you I am willing to be a prisoner myself if only my—if Lieutenant Dalrymple can be exchanged. He is a prisoner on board the *Jersey*, and I have heard what his life there is." She shuddered and pressed her hands together. "Oh, General Washington, I beg of you to have him released. Surely you can do it. He is my promised husband, and I"—she colored furiously but held her head high and looked him squarely in the eye, "I love him. He is all the world to me. Sir, I entreat you to have him exchanged." She leaned forward with a look in her blue-gray eyes that might have moved a stone.

Her radiant youth and grace and the passion and pathos of her plea, struck on Washington's melancholy mood like a blow on the tenderest spot. He felt his eyes blur as he said gravely: "My dear Miss Windham, if it were in my power to release our brave men in the British prisons I should not have waited for

your appeal to do so, and neither your lover nor any other man should remain a prisoner for one hour. But I am no more able to do this than any private in the ranks. Sad as it is for you, and unwilling as I am to tell you, I am compelled to say that our men in the hands of the British are beyond my power."

"But I do not mean all of the men," said Elizabeth, bewildered and innocent. "I am afraid you will think me selfish, General Washington, but if you could just get Robert exchanged ——" She paused expectantly.

"That is just what I am explaining to you I cannot do," said Washington, patiently. "It would give me the greatest happiness to restore your sweetheart to you, but I am greatly grieved that I cannot do so."

Elizabeth's wide-eyed gaze fastened on him with increasing terror.

"But," she gasped, the breath fluttering brokenly through her trembling lips, "but, sir, you do not mean that you can't get Robert out? Not one man?"

Washington bowed with grave finality. The girl gave one wild look around, as though seeking for the succor she was denied, and then fell back in her chair with a bitter cry that pierced Tallmadge's ears on the other side of the door and made him start anxiously. Every nerve in Washington's sensitive nature throbbed in sympathy, but he spoke in a calm, even tone:

"Miss Windham, you are a brave girl and well

worthy of the noble young fellow whom you honor with your love. As the Commander-in-Chief of the army, I wish to assure you that on you, and on such women as you, not less than on our troops, I rely for the success of our cause. We wish to save our beloved country for our homes and firesides, and when our men die on the battle-field, in loathsome prisons, or otherwise"—his voice changed—"it is our duty, yours and mine, to bear the loss with all the fortitude we can summon, for the end is not yet."

"Our homes and families!" sobbed Elizabeth, sorely wounded by this Spartan philosophy. "Sir, will there be any homes and families if all our men perish miserably?"

"God will take care of that," said Washington, almost sternly. "He will not permit us as a nation to be crushed. We shall survive as a people. And, Miss Windham, do you believe yourself to be the only maiden in New York grieving for an imprisoned lover? Do you know how many of our men the British hold as prisoners? They captured about twelve hundred at the battle of Long Island, and these, with our losses since and the men they held before, make between four and five thousand men they have. They hold the city of New York in their hands, and virtually control the situation. Many such appeals as yours have I listened to. Only yes-

terday a poor woman knelt at my feet in this very room and with sobs and tears entreated me to get her husband, the father of her five children, off of the *Jersey*. I could do no more for her than for you. My remonstrances to the British officers are met with detailed statements that no cruelty is used, that every possible attention is given to the comfort of the prisoners and that their food is of the best. Not an hour before you came in I received a letter from Cunningham"—he pointed to some loose sheets on the table—"protesting against the reports of his barbarities. Madam, I am helpless." He finished bitterly.

"Sir," said Elizabeth, stirred by a deep, altruistic emotion, "I regret that I have added one pang to your overburdened heart. I am not so selfish that all my sorrow is for myself and none for others. But, General, why do you not exchange prisoners?"

"Exchange!" echoed Washington, the terrible grief he had recently suffered rushing in upon him again in a fresh tide. "Exchange! Alas! We have none to exchange, or nothing but a beggarly handful, and they are only too glad to refuse these when they can retaliate as they have done of late. I would have given every British soldier within our lines for Nathan Hale."

The last words escaped him in the passion of sorrow, for he had loved Hale. In the relaxation of the

moment melancholy claimed him completely. With a heavy sigh that was almost a sob he leaned his head on his hand and an inexpressible sadness settled on his face, the same expression that at intervals had appeared ever since he had wept unashamed before his officers on the morning of the day Hale was executed.

An exclamation burst from Elizabeth and rising she flung herself on her knees by Washington, and taking his hand in hers, she said: "Sir, sir! Oh, forgive me for bringing my trouble to you. I am ashamed, and I will try to be as noble as you were good enough to say I am. General, Robert and Nathan were friends; they were in Yale together, and I knew him too. Poor Nathan! The night before they hung him he asked to have his love sent to Robert, and said: 'Tell Rob when he gets out of prison to take up the work where he left off.' Sir, if our men cannot be exchanged, they can at least die bravely. Robert Dalrymple is every inch a hero, and if necessary——" She faltered.

"Nay," interrupted Washington. "God grant that Lieutenant Dalrymple leaves the *Jersey*, and I'll see to it that a new commission goes to him for his gallant action on the field." He pressed the hands of the kneeling girl closely in his own, and continued: "I knew of the friendship between Nathan and Robert, and I am glad you knew Nathan. Apparently he died

covered with the ignominy of the spy, but posterity will honor him for doing a service which, as he himself said, became noble by being necessary. The manner of his death has grieved me greatly, but the price of liberty is many martyrs. Think of Alice Adams, Nathan's betrothed, and reflect how much better your lot is than hers, for you will see your lover again. I fear you think me a poor general who cannot get even one man out of prison, but I will do the best I can. I will write a special letter in his behalf, and ask for him on the first list of exchange, so cheer up and keep a stout heart."

He gently lifted her and added: "And now, Miss Windham, much as I am loath to part with you, I have no alternative. I have matters of importance pressing, and I must beg of you to pardon the seeming discourtesy if I say that I must defer the pleasure of your company to some future time, no later than dinner, I hope, for I trust you will honor us with your presence. I have some agreeable young men in my family."

"Sir, I thank you," replied Elizabeth, smiling and curtseying, "but it will be impossible. My uncle will return in time for our own dinner, and I dare not let him know of my journey to you. At some other time I shall be happy to accept Your Excellency's invitation."

"Not too long hence," said Washington. "Take my advice and get your uncle locked up in the Sugar House while you bestow your smiles on us for a few hours at least." He stooped quickly and picked up the little white shawl that had slipped to the floor, and if he took a marvelously long time in replacing it on Elizabeth's plump shoulders, it was no more than might have been expected from the illustrious Father of his Country, who was entirely human in the matter of beautiful women. "Lieutenant Dalrymple was on my staff," he said, "and in his absence I will perform one of his duties myself." With a tender and paternal air he kissed her on the forehead. "For the present, farewell."

It happened that the door was not entirely closed, and the zealous orderly, in the strict discharge of his duty, witnessed the chaste salute. He turned to find General Greene impatiently awaiting audience with Washington.

"What does this delay mean?" he demanded. "I have been kept waiting ten minutes. Is Howe himself in there?"

"A more important person, General," said Tallmadge. "A lady, come hither under my escort."

"His Excellency has just kissed her," announced the orderly.

"Oh, ho!" cried Greene. "Tallmadge, you're soon

cut out. I'd like to have a turn at that sort of thing myself. If I ever get in there I'll ——"

The towering form of the Commander-in-Chief appearing in the doorway with the blushing Elizabeth on his arm paralyzed every tongue.

"General, I'm glad to see you. Tallmadge, escort this lady safely to her home on peril of your life. Come in, Greene. Woods, admit no one else."

CHAPTER VII

A Good Example

NEW York City during the Revolution was virtually a captured garrison post, wherein the captors took full possession of mansions, churches, estates, all public and private buildings, and used them freely for their own pleasure and purposes. With the exception of the Episcopal churches, Trinity and St. Paul's, all the houses of worship were converted into barracks, hospitals, jails or riding schools for the officers, and at the end of the war the condition they were in was suggestive of anything but the purpose for which they had originally been erected.

The elegant private residences of the day made sumptuous quarters for the British officers installed in them. Many fleeing Whig families had not been able to remove costly furniture and imported draperies, and in some instances even services of solid silver, made to order and heavily carved and ornamented, had been left behind to do duty for the invaders. Spurred boots rested on stuffed sofas and easy chairs, plumed chapeaus were thrown carelessly on inlaid chairs, fit for royalty; pipes lay overturned on carved marble

mantels surmounted by great mirrors in massive gilt frames, reflecting scenes of masculine freedom instead of the polite society of wig and petticoat that had formerly pirouetted under the chandeliers. Costly paintings, relics, imported family treasures, porcelain, cut glass, fine linen, Gobelin tapestries, expensive carvings in marble and mahogany brought from London, all contributed not a little to the comfort of the thoroughly established invaders.

After the great fire the cost of living increased and there was an unusual demand for lodgings. Boarding houses flourished greatly and rates rapidly became excessive, until in 1777 more than one unfortunate "paying guest" complained that living was devilish high, and not without reason. Board was £4 per week, not including washing, shaving, candles, liquors, pipes, tobacco and wood. Everything became outrageously high, and scarce at any price. Tallow dips were used instead of wax candles, even in the theatres and the churches.

But the social life was unhampered. The city was a scene of gayety, fashion, frivolity and extravagance. With the departure of so many families the proportion of the feminine element was considerably reduced, and every desirable woman had a throng of suitors. Elizabeth, with her youth, beauty and rebel tendencies, might have had a score of Tory lovers at her feet, but

her intense loyalty to Robert succeeded in keeping all at a distance, so far as making any headway was concerned, though it was impossible for her to restrain their attentions, openly encouraged as they were by Peter. Rutherford, of course, led the list, nor could Elizabeth shake him off, for in addition to being an ardent and determined suitor, he had from the first captured Peter completely and had at once impressed him with the idea that he was the most eligible parti for Elizabeth who had ever appeared on the scene.

Fashionable Tory leaders—and the women were the leaders in that gay set—set a stirring pace for the social life, and dinners, parties, balls and assemblies made up a brilliant rout in which Elizabeth was a prominent and courted figure. Mrs. Fitzmorris was over from Philadelphia much of the time, for she took much more kindly to social life than Mrs. Hardy, and under her watchful and ambitious eye Elizabeth was tutored in worldly wisdom until secretly she rebelled and in the solitude of her room prayed earnestly for that freedom dearest to a woman's heart—freedom to love the man of her choice.

She had but little consolation in the way of companionship with her former friends. Many families had left the city, and those who remained were under the ban at Tory houses, and nowhere more completely than at Peter Simpson's. Even Elizabeth's girl friends

were not welcome by him, though she managed to receive one occasionally, and she did that as she did everything—openly, though not without the inevitable conflict with Peter.

"No, Uncle Peter, Nellie Musgrove is not a spy, and you know it. You've known her from a baby, and mamma and her mother were friends, and you know that she is just one of my girl chums. You may stay in the room and hear every word that is said if you want to, but put yourself in my place and see if you think you'd like to be refused permission to see your friends, just because you had a guardian who didn't want you to, and all for some silly reason."

The girl's face was warmly flushed, her eyes starry, her expression sparkling with the agitated tumult of her tender heart. Many, many such passages had she had with this stubborn, passionate, but soft-hearted man, who was secretly her slave. He grunted now, and Elizabeth, recognizing a familiar sign of good omen, hastened to follow up her advantage by assuming her most bewitching smile, calculating, like a true daughter of Eve, on the weapons with which Venus had equipped her at birth.

"Not a spy! Well, I scarcely think she's carrying cipher dispatches, but all these rebels are spies and a chit of a girl can prate as much as anybody. Mr. Washington's spies are within our lines constantly.

They come into this city and go out of it every day, in spite of the utmost vigilance, and it behooves all loyal adherents to take every possible precaution. We can trust no one in these days—no one at all. As for staying in the room to hear the silly prattle of two simple girls about such trash as clothes, I've something better to do."

"Oh, uncle!" cried Elizabeth, who knew now that she had won, "that reminds me that my best white silk is ruined, and I'll have to have another. That stupid Jim Lowes stepped on it at the last assembly and tore it to ribbons. Nellie had to pin and pin me in the dressing-room, and Madame Chaumant says she can do nothing respectable with it."

She looked at Peter with a touching despair.

"Considering that you're a rebel yourself, and anything good enough for the likes of you, I suppose I'll have to clothe you in purple and fine linen," growled Peter. "At this rate I'll soon be a poor man, war or no war, and you'd better get a wealthy husband to furnish your folderols, eh, Bess?"

She flushed again, more deeply and more charmingly than ever, but shook her head with the air of a spoiled child.

"I think I'll be an old maid," she said. The deep disgrace that attached to that estate in those days can scarcely be conceived now. A woman then was

usually married before she was twenty, and not to be wedded at the age of twenty-five was to be hopelessly ancient. Peter threw back his head and roared.

"A good thing," he said. "I can see you now with corkscrew curls and a wig, grinning from a corner like an animated nut-cracker at every young gallant who is making sheep's eyes at your young and lovely rivals. And it's coming fast too, Bess. You're seventeen now, and in another year your teeth will begin to drop out, and as for crow's feet, 'pon my soul you've got them now."

"Uncle Peter!" shrieked Elizabeth. She flew at him and pommeled him with all the fury of firm arms whose smooth roundness was as yet untouched by decay. Peter cried for mercy early. "Ouch!" he said. "I take it back. Deliver me from a pet Amazon that breaks loose."

"That isn't any better," said Elizabeth.

"Well, there's no pleasing some women. When a gentle female takes it into her head to be aggrieved all the sweet names in the vocabulary won't appease her. I'm afraid to call you anything now, but if you spare what's left of me I'll get you another white silk frock to go the way of all the rest."

Elizabeth stroked his hair at the temples, where the tell-tale traces of fifty years showed significantly. "Dear Uncle Peter," she said, "I think you are just

lovely to me. I'll give that old thing to Julia, she's had her eye on it for a long time. Won't she cut a figure in it leading a cake-walk?"

"With a vengeance. She'll look like a thunder-cloud in a snow-storm, and if that yellow nigger, Adolph, is her mate I don't know whether I can stand the sight or not."

"Poor Adolph! Julia does treat him so badly."

Peter snorted. "Black and white you're all alike there. As soon as a man's in love with a woman she puts her foot on his neck and walks all over him."

"Has the widow been unkind to you?" asked Elizabeth, innocently.

"To me! The dev——! Er, Bess, don't get a wrong idea into your head there. If you mean Mrs. Earle you needn't bother yourself on that subject. I've never offered her anything but ordinary civility, and as for marrying her—why it's ridiculous. I'm not a marrying man, Bess, and if I ever were to commit the crime of matrimony there'd be no lording it over me. I'd be master. 'Tis the only way to prevent a woman from being a vixen."

He felt something shaking against his shoulder, heard strange, muffled sounds, and lifted her head to find her convulsed with laughter.

"Oh, poor Uncle Peter!" she gasped. "I shall have to protect you," she went on, wiping her eyes. "Oh,

what a despot you will be!" She relapsed into mirth. Deep within him Peter felt a qualm. He had already encountered the widow's airy pleasantry, and he knew that with all his wealth and influence Mistress Earle was not the woman to give her hand without her heart.

"Hark you, Bess," he said, "make as merry as you like, but 'tis true that I'll never be the slave of a petticoat after the fashion of some men, married and unmarried. And you may laugh all day, my girl, but remember that the most scornful maid makes the meekest wife."

Elizabeth sat up and looked as solemn as fun-brimming eyes and dimpled mouth would permit. "I'll remember; just think how meek I'll be. But, Uncle Peter, don't you think she's a spy?"

Peter surveyed his niece carefully. What was to be the end of such alarming logic! By way of gaining time he took snuff, and decided on the good old way of answering.

"If she is, don't you think it my duty to capture her and mete out the just punishment of a spy?"

Elizabeth gave unmistakable signs of joy. "That's right, Uncle Peter, but remember, you're not to marry without my consent."

"I shall set a good example to some other people by my obedience."

"I know you don't mean me, but I hope the other people will do you credit."

"Quite likely. Here comes one now who might." He looked out of the window and indicated a girlish figure approaching.

"Why, here's Nellie now! Oh, Uncle Peter, you don't really care at all, do you?"

Peter was already half way to the door. "Anything but clothes!" he muttered. He narrowly escaped falling over Elizabeth's young caller in the door, and bowed her in with his accustomed bland air. He disappeared up the stairway with the echoes of their laughter in his ears, and half an hour later, when he emerged from his room, freshly powdered and groomed, he bent his steps to the widow Earle's.

CHAPTER VIII

We Are Wrong

THE year closed gloriously for American arms. The drunken Rahl, carousing with his officers at headquarters in Trenton, had paid the price, and Washington was covered with glory. In England Lord Germain said: "Our hopes are blasted by that unhappy affair at Trenton." Horace Walpole said: "I look upon a great part of America as lost to this country."

When, on that memorable night of the twenty-fifth of December, Washington had personally encouraged the *Marblehead* mariners in manning the boats, and had himself assisted in the embarkation, he little dreamed that he would not only teach the British a lesson, but would also win military reputation by it, but to this day it remains as one of the most brilliant and daring manœuvres on record. Closely wrapped in a great cloak to protect him from the bitter cold of the night, the Chief went among the men, facing all the hardships they encountered from three o'clock in the afternoon until well into the morning of the following day, and displayed that remarkable power of

physical endurance which gave him not a little prestige with the troops.

With him were his best generals, Greene, Sullivan, Mercer, Stirling, Knox, Hand, Stark, and all his young and enthusiastic staff officers, Hamilton and others. Tallmadge was one of his aides, and was active all night, and every officer vied with every one else to emulate the example set by their Commander. A little before four in the morning Knox and Tallmadge were tugging at one of the boats, while Washington stood near. The river was running full of ice and the current was swift and difficult to stem. The great coats of both men were a sheet of ice and sleet, having been frozen stiff early in the night by the intense cold.

"Thank God we're almost done," said Tallmadge. "There are only about half-a-dozen boats left. I am frozen solid."

"Steady!" said Knox. "Now, boys." Six men pulled and tugged at a boat that had stuck and got it afloat, and Knox and Tallmadge barely saved a man who dropped on the ice as the boat slipped off. He had succumbed to cold and exhaustion, and Knox poured a few drops of liquor between his lips, while Tallmadge vigorously rubbed his hands.

Less than an hour later Tallmadge himself barely had his ears saved. They had swollen to an enormous size and were white with the peculiar waxiness of

frozen flesh. The treatment he received was barely in time to save them, and by then they had landed on the other side of the Delaware and had a nine-mile march before them. He marched with Washington and Greene in the advance guard, led by Capt. William Washington, who had James Monroe as his first lieutenant. This division was the column to the left. Sullivan led the other, along the river road. All suffered terribly from the cold. The march in the snow, with stinging winds biting at every step, was a difficult exertion for the men, after a night spent in launching the boats, but no one grumbled.

The artillery was lumbering along in the snow, which fortunately deadened the rumble, and they were about half way to Trenton when a messenger arrived from Sullivan. Washington was ahead, side by side with Greene, and Tallmadge was just behind with Monroe when the man rode up and said: "Sir, I am sent by General Sullivan to say that the storm has ruined many of the muskets, and his detachment is greatly weakened."

Washington hesitated not a moment. His figure straightened a little in the saddle as he replied: "Tell General Sullivan to use the bayonet instead, for the town must be taken." The messenger saluted and turned away, to ride back in the darkness.

"A lot of our men are in the same fix," said Tall-

madge, "but bayonets will be all right, if they aren't frozen off too. I could swear I'm an icicle from head to foot."

"It's tough," assented Monroe, "but it makes the attack a sure thing for us. If any of that hot toddy is left I'll find time to try it."

When in the early day they had entered the town, the thirty-five minute engagement had been full of picturesque interest. Washington stayed with the artillery, and personally directed the firing, but as soon as the attack was fairly on he had ridden from point to point, disregarding his personal safety, and inspiring the whole action. At the end of that historic half hour the Continentals had taken nearly one thousand prisoners, besides a great quantity of field-pieces and small arms, and in the sudden surprise drunken Hessians reaching out for a glass of steaming punch were taken prisoner before they could drink it, and saw Monroe's benevolent intention imitated by many of their captors.

When they summed up their own losses, the Americans found that they had lost only four privates, of whom two had been frozen to death. "It was a wonder it was not two hundred instead," said Tallmadge a few days later. "Most of the men got enough that night. The regiments are going to pieces."

"The army will be pretty nearly disbanded by the

time all the men whose time expires go home," said Knox, "but those who have volunteered to serve six weeks longer without pay are setting a good pace. It's just as well for them not to stipulate for pay, as we haven't any money."

That was on Saturday, the twenty-eighth, and on the thirtieth Washington effected the second crossing over the Delaware and proceeded to Trenton again, having withdrawn with his troops and prisoners across the river on the evening of the same day he made the first attack. In Trenton he took up his headquarters in the house of Major John Barnes, a Royalist, not far from the Assunpink Creek. There he reorganized his forces and wrote an urgent letter to Robert Morris, in Philadelphia, asking for money at once.

"My own fortune is pledged, and that of all my officers," he said to Greene, "and still we are so nearly bankrupt that there is no money to pay the troops. The paymaster has no funds; our public credit is exhausted. The time of whole regiments is out with the last day of the year, and we must have more."

"Sir," said Knox, "the extraordinary powers with which the Congress has just invested you, and the fact that our commissioners in France are authorized to borrow two millions sterling, are quite enough to raise the wherewithal to pay all the troops now and hereafter, indefinitely." He looked around gravely at his

brother officers, as if he expected them to believe him.

"What you need is a commission to inquire into your sanity," growled Stirling.

"My dear Knox," said Washington, "I know you are an optimist of the first water, but we need solid coin instead of a financial theory. I shall write to Morris to-day."

Morris received the letter without delay, as Washington sent a special messenger post-haste, and he read: "Borrow money while it can be done. No time, my dear sir, is to be lost."

He obeyed literally, and on New Year's morning, before wealthy Philadelphians were out of their beds, Morris was thundering at their knockers, and respectable citizens, still night-capped and gowned, signed checks under his urgent representations, so that before noon of the same day Morris sent Washington fifty thousand dollars.

But even a more brilliant achievement was in store for the troops. Cornwallis, about to sail for Europe, was hastily sent back to repair the damage wrought at Trenton, and with seven thousand men was making ready to descend on the army. Washington had word of the intended movement, and sent Greene and Hand to hold the British in check. The extreme cold had moderated somewhat, and the men were in good spir-

its from their recent success. The British general came to a halt within a mile of Trenton, and then encamped his troops on the hill above the town, confident that he had Washington trapped. The Chief, in full uniform and mounted on a white horse, rode out late in the afternoon, and showed himself to all the men. A heavy, foggy night fell, with the two armies lying on opposite sides of the creek, camp-fires burning and sentries pacing. Those on duty at the British outposts heard the sound of digging all night, where intrenchments were evidently being thrown up by the Americans.

At daybreak a distant rumbling of cannon in the direction of Princeton alarmed Cornwallis. The American army had disappeared during the night, and Cornwallis hastened after to protect the depository of stores at New Brunswick. His discomfiture was complete. Washington took his worn-out troops, after the capture of Princeton, and withdrew to Morristown, where he went into winter quarters, and the expeditions he sent out so harassed the British general that he was compelled to evacuate all his posts west of New Brunswick, and concentrate his troops there for safety.

That winter saw the marauding parties begun, which did such devastating mischief to the end of the war. The bitterest hatred was engendered in the Tories by

the bill passed later which confiscated all estates of those who adhered to the British crown after a certain date. The refugees were furious, even though the act provided a period of grace in which without loss of property they might renew their allegiance.

Deeds of daring and gallantry characterized the winter. Late in January Washington wrote the order of discharge to the Philadelphia Light Horse, under Captain Morris, and said: "I take this opportunity of returning my most sincere thanks to the Captain and to the gentlemen who compose the troop for the many essential services which they have rendered to their country, and to me personally during the course of this severe campaign. Though composed of gentlemen of fortune, they have shown a noble example of discipline and subordination, and in several actions have shown a spirit of bravery which will ever do honor to them and will ever be gratefully remembered by me."

When the raw winds of March blew the resources of the Americans were at a low ebb. Smallpox had raged in the army in Canada, and despite all precautions the troops in camp had also suffered from it at Morristown and under Parsons in Connecticut. Worse than all was the prospect of opening the spring campaign with depleted ranks. The Chief held many anxious consultations with his staff and officers, and his correspondence with the Congress is burdened

with accounts of the weakened condition of the force.

"The trouble is," said Stirling, "that we have been obliged to put too much dependence on the militia, and some fine day, when the enemy finds out just how weak we are they will swoop down and seize all our magazines, and we shall be left without arms or artillery."

"Nothing but their ignorance of our numbers has protected us," replied Washington. "The enlistment of the militia always runs out at the time they are most needed, and the equipment of the state battalions has been deplorably slow. By the best intelligence I can get, Howe must have about ten thousand men in the Jerseys and on the transports at Amboy. On the fifteenth of this month I shall be left with the remains of five Virginia regiments, and parts of two or three other Continental battalions, all very weak, and the rest of the army will be made up of small parties of militia from Jersey and Pennsylvania, so that the whole of our numbers in Jersey fit for duty, is not more than three thousand. The troops under inoculation amount to about one thousand. Gentlemen, I know the Lord is on our side, but even the God of battles needs men. I fear we shall not meet the enemy with serried ranks."

"Sir," said Stirling, "it is true the outlook is not

cheerful, yet I feel convinced that when spring has fairly opened we shall be pretty well reinforced. The severity of the winter has operated against us, but if Howe remains as sluggish as he has been we have nothing to fear."

In May, Washington removed camp to Middlebrook, New Jersey, where he remained until the Fourth of July. Howe evacuated New Brunswick and retreated to Amboy, burning everything in his path as he went, and on the last day of June he took his whole army over to Staten Island and left the state of New Jersey without British troops within her borders for the first time in many months.

'Squire Elliott came down from Westchester frequently that winter, and endeavored to ingratiate himself with Elizabeth as a future husband, but before spring he knew that, much as he desired the prize, his wishes were hopeless. Paul was often with him, and Elizabeth discovered to her joy that the young man had secret leanings towards the Continental cause, and the knowledge made a deep, sympathetic bond between them which many times enlivened life for the girl when the constant harping of Mrs. Hardy on the subject of a suitable match became almost unbearable. Paul was a warm-hearted, impulsive young fellow, and, having known Elizabeth ever since they both were children, he was deeply interested in the love affair

of herself and Robert. For months he had been privately pledged to get any word of Robert that he could for her, but he was unable to obtain any, for after the episode of the letter the prisoners on board the *Jersey* and the other prison ships, were subjected to a rigorous watchfulness that precluded all possibility of future communication, and the officers ceased to give out the verbal messages they had hitherto done.

Peter entertained more lavishly than ever that winter, and the most noted Tories of the city sat at his hospitable board, while a bevy of young officers paid devoted court to Elizabeth. These she rather encouraged than otherwise, as they served to hold Rutherford at some distance. But not all of the time. He had been out of the city for several weeks in the latter part of the winter, and on his return was a guest at dinner. It was the last week of March and a day of remarkable balminess, so that the windows were open. 'Squire Elliott and Paul were also there and Mrs. Axtell, who was a De Puyster, a Royalist of the first water. Her husband had been one of the Governor's council before the war, and the De Puysters and Axtells were pillars in the stronghold of the Tories.

The conversation ran on the all-absorbing topic of the day. Rutherford had been with Howe at Princeton, and was no better pleased with the twin achievements of Washington than could be expected. "I

assure you, madam," he said to Mrs. Axtell, "it was devilish disagreeable for our men at New Brunswick. We were cooped up there for weeks, and not so much as a stick of wood or a pint of corn could we get without a skirmish, unless it was sent over from New York. Really, it seemed quite an odd state of affairs, for this Mr. Washington has but a ragged handful compared to our troops, but we propose to turn the tables on them very soon."

"I suppose it is all the fortune of war," said Mrs. Axtell, "and that first one side and then the other may gain the advantage, but we had not expected things to go this way."

"Oh, it will soon be different. We have planned to finish matters up this summer, and deliver the ladies from war's alarms. Shall you not be delighted, Miss Windham?"

Elizabeth, sorely tempted to make a spirited reply, as she would have done had they been alone, dared not obey her impulse with so many eyes and ears in hostile array. "I shall be charmed. Of course here in New York we haven't anything to frighten us, and yet, as you say, I'm sure things will be—different." She looked modestly down, but the slight pause she made before the last word was not without its significance. She felt Mrs. Hardy's eyes penetrate her, as that lady said:

"Bess enjoys everything, even war."

"Well, for my part I must say I think it has its fascination," said Mrs. Axtell. "I'm sure the tone of society has been improved, and Mrs. De Lancey said only yesterday that she had never met so many agreeable men before."

"I have the honor of knowing Mrs. De Lancey," said Rutherford, "and I would take the compliment to myself if I dared. You know we are on some black lists."

"I think we would all be willing to go on the black lists you mean," said Mrs. Axtell. "No rebel should be received under my roof or sit at my table."

"You are fortunate if you succeed in that. The trouble nowadays is that there are so many rebels in disguise that sometimes not all the members of one family can be trusted." It was Rutherford who spoke, and Elizabeth knew the reply was meant for her. Her cheeks grew hot and words sprung to her lips, but before she could utter them 'Squire Elliott said:

"A few more rebels here, whether in disguise or not, makes little difference, but it is alarming to see the strength of the opposition at home. Parliament has clashed all winter. Rockingham, Cavendish and Shelburne have all made speeches favoring the outlaws. The Duke of Grafton has come out for them; Edmund Burke has advised peace on any terms.

Chatham in his retirement has used his influence constantly for the colonists. When men of such weight have gone over to the other side we have something serious to fight internally."

Peter lifted up his voice in reply, and under cover of the lively interchange that took place, Rutherford turned to Elizabeth at his side, and she promptly seized the opportunity.

"At least the rebels in this family are not in disguise, Colonel Rutherford."

"No disguise could be as charming as the reality."

Elizabeth was silent, an alarming symptom for her. Rutherford became anxious to counteract the effect of his previous remarks. He spoke in a low, carefully inflected tone:

"When the war is over and things are—different, I hope that you will let me make the difference for both of us. If I can make you happy it will be the difference I wish."

"You can make me happy now—to-day."

"I am at your service."

"Use your influence to get Lieutenant Dalrymple exchanged."

Across the table Elizabeth caught a warning glance from Paul, and she saw Mrs. Hardy and Mrs. Axtell regarding her curiously. Peter and the 'Squire were deep in an argument on the Ministry.

"You look surprised, Colonel," said Mrs. Axtell. "Has Miss Windham routed you?"

"Horse and foot, I assure you. Any man would expect to do the seven labors of Hercules at the bidding of a woman, but Miss Windham requires more than that."

"Really, how interesting. Would it be indiscreet to ask what it is?"

Rutherford turned to Elizabeth. "Have I permission?"

"I trust to your discretion, Colonel Rutherford."

"This is probably meant as a challenge, but I prefer to assume that you throw yourself on my mercy."

"I am more curious than ever now," insisted Mrs. Axtell.

"Alas!" said Rutherford, "I am in the last ditch. I am unable to gratify either of you. War is no jest when it reduces a man to a plight like this. Believe me, madam, I need your sympathy."

When the ladies rose from the table Paul Elliott also excused himself, and leaving the two older women in the drawing-room he and Elizabeth went out into the yard in the rear and strolled up and down the broad walks. The flood of sunlight made one of the warm days that might have been May, and all about them were signs of spring. Every branch was swelling and the robins were singing.

"You had a narrow escape at the table," said Paul. "For a moment I was certain that Mrs. Axtell had heard you."

"Did you?" asked Elizabeth, startled.

"Yes; but I was listening, you don't mind, do you? She had noticed you a good deal through dinner, and I knew she had her ears open to catch what passed between you and Rutherford."

"Oh, I am watched all the time," sighed the girl. "I never have a moment when every word I say is not commented on. Paul, can't you think of *any* way to get some word from him?"

"I have thought of at least twenty ways, but none of them will work. The best you can do is to wait and hope that he will be exchanged, for he surely will be some day."

"I try to believe that, but the waiting is hard, and so many of the men die. I cannot understand why he has not been exchanged long before now."

"There are doubtless those who understand it in full. You may rest assured that wires have been pulled. In cases like these, where every process is concealed, it is useless to speculate."

They walked in silence. The light wind lifted Elizabeth's hair from her forehead and blew it in little waves that curled like an aureole. Paul was about to speak, but as they were near the long window that was

open, and the women were just inside, he waited until they had gone to the further end of the walk, and said: "Let us sit here." They sat on a rustic bench, but he got no further in his words. Elizabeth looked at him earnestly.

"What is it, Paul?"

"Bess, of course I know I can trust you. I am about convinced that we are wrong."

Elizabeth stared at him open-eyed for an instant. She had not expected such an outspoken declaration.

"Oh, Paul, do you mean it?" she cried.

"Sh! Not so loud. Yes; I've had some warm arguments with the governor, and matters are strained between us. It's the principle of the thing, and then, somehow a lot of the best fellows I know are with the Continentals, and they're at me all the time. Danged if I don't think the old war's unnecessary anyhow."

"Paul! Oh, I can't tell you how delighted I am! I knew long ago that you had some sympathy for—for our side, but I didn't think you'd come over entirely. Paul, I never dared say '*our*' side here before."

The young fellow looked at her admiringly. "Bess, you're the right sort. Now tell the truth, 'pon honor—would you have been on the rebel side if Dalrymple hadn't been in love with you and got you to his way of thinking?"

"'Pon honor, Paul, I would. You see it's in me to

want my own way, and I don't like to be bossed, and I understand the 'principle' too, as you say. I think it's just the same as if Uncle Peter would ask me to pay his taxes. Yes, I really was a rebel before I met Robert."

"Oh, but you're in for it!" laughed Paul. "You're the kind of girl to be bossed right and left when you're married. I hope he gets off that ship. Keep it up, Bess, while you can."

"I shall keep it up after I'm married just as much as before," asserted Elizabeth. "Will you enlist, Paul?"

"I have no immediate intention of enlisting, but there's no telling when I may. The fact is I don't care for war, don't believe in that sort of thing. I hate to go against the governor, too, and he knows it. He wants me on his own side. I was offered a lieutenant's commission under Burgoyne, and dad didn't like it when I refused."

"Well, if I were a man I'd enlist to-morrow."

"The governor says there's a special Providence for women. I'll nose around, Bess, and see if anything can be found out about your young man. Imagine what he would do to Rutherford if he should catch him making love to you!"

"It seems to me I can't have any fun. Even if I try to joke, a lot of the men seem to misunderstand me."

"Cheer up, Bess, it could be a lot worse. There might not be any men at all."

"Well, I'm sure none of you make any difference to me."

"Don't get personal. Ah, there's the governor at the window, and he's likely to head this way. Don't you think it's a shame for me to cut him out in this underhanded manner?"

"Oh, let us go in," said Elizabeth, hastily, rising. "Cousin Amanda doesn't like for me to remain out of the drawing-room so long. Come down as often as you can."

No word came from Robert. Elizabeth shut her life within herself bravely before others, and saw many hours of sadness and fearful hoping in her room, comforted only by the faithful Julia. She was obliged to go out with Rutherford a good deal all through the spring and early summer, and July found him more attentive than ever.

CHAPTER IX

To Our Loved Ones

THE morning of the Fourth dawned clear and brilliant. Before sunrise a faint haze had hung over the bay, and the ships that lay at anchor had showed their stately outlines shrouded in ghostly gray. But with the first spears of sunlight the mists had fled, and before the earliest citizens were astir the spires of the churches had sparkled in the shimmering flood of light that bathed the city. Negro servants swarmed about the Tea Water Pump, where water for cooking purposes was obtained, the water of the city being brackish and no system having yet been installed, and gossiped of their masters and mistresses after the manner of servants.

The day was ushered in quietly enough. What is now the great national holiday, beginning several days previous and heralded with hideous noises to test the nerves of the most patriotic, was then but the first feeble anniversary of the determined patriots, and in New York, under martial rule and in the grip of the Royalists, the Continentals who remained made but a few sporadic and unsatisfactory attempts to celebrate.

Yet the attempts were made, and met with the result which might have been expected.

In her white bed Elizabeth had slept and dreamed, and in the vision of sleep that came to her she had been with her lover, their arms had embraced and their lips had touched, and then, through this tender Elysian field, had echoed a strident note that roused her and sent her, dewy-eyed and still dreamy with slumber, to her window. It was just daybreak, the sky was redly flushed and the atmosphere was not yet charged with the heat of the day. Elizabeth, leaning out of the window and looking down the street, saw approaching a small company of youths and boys, marching in what was supposed to be martial order, but in reality struggling along manfully after a fife and drum playing a patriotic quickstep. Their leader carried a flag, evidently of home manufacture, and each one wore the tricolor, while some of the more favored carried small flags. As they drew near Peter's house the fervor of the drum and fife increased, and not a few looked up inquiringly.

The flag-bearer at the head of the little column caught sight of Elizabeth and saluted, waving vigorously. The action attracted the attention of the rest, and with a general shout every banner was waved and a treble of shrill voices cried: "Hooray for George Washington!"

The defiance thrilled her, and she felt her blood tingle as, forgetting all else but Robert and the cause he represented, she responded with a smile of lips and eyes, and waved her hand in reply.

"Elizabeth!" said a stern voice behind her. Mrs. Hardy had also been awakened by the shrill notes, and she stood by Elizabeth in horrified amazement.

"Don't they look nice!" said Elizabeth. She drew back from the window, gave one look at Mrs. Hardy's set face, and broke into laughter.

"Your conduct is shameful. Have you not even any modesty left, to show yourself this way? And waving a salute to a beggarly lot of rebels from this house!"

"That's why it's funny," said Elizabeth. "Think if it had been Uncle Peter instead."

Mrs. Hardy was too exasperated to speak, but as though in reply to the last words, the front door closed heavily, and Elizabeth saw Peter's portly form hasten in the direction of the law-breakers.

"There he goes now! What a pity they didn't get a better start!"

"You had better dress yourself," said Mrs. Hardy, curtly, returning to her room.

"Indeed I will," said Elizabeth, meekly, but bubbling over. The little episode had exhilarated her, and as she slipped her bodice over her white shoulders be-

fore the glass a radiant warmth filled her that augured happiness for the future. "How dreadful it must be to get cross," she thought. "I wonder why Cousin Amanda never feels cheerful."

At the breakfast table Peter unfolded the fate of the young criminals. They had indeed come to a sad end. An officer had swooped down on them and had attempted to disperse them, and in the undignified scrimmage that ensued the flag had been torn and captured and the officer had been roughly handled, but with assistance had managed to arrest half-a-dozen or so and march them off to be locked up, and others of the offenders had suffered from blows indiscriminately dealt out by those who came to the rescue of the King's representative, and then had fled and saved themselves as best they might. Incidentally, a daring resident of Maiden Lane who had hung out a flag had been ordered to take it in, and having refused he too was taken along, while his wife leaned out of the window and hurled uncomplimentary remarks.

"They're taken care of now," concluded Peter. "These fine rebels are getting a dose of what they were giving us not so long ago. The King's men called before the Committee on Conspiracy, hauled up before self-constituted judges and questioned this, that and the other. Asked whether we thought the Parliament had the right to tax the colonies; whether de-

fense by arms was justifiable; whether we were willing to swear allegiance to the colonies! And then, as if that were not enough, some carried through the streets on rails at noonday, with torn clothes and faces stained with mud and dirt thrown by the outlaws. There's another order of things now, and they're finding it out."

He looked suspiciously at Elizabeth, but she was occupied with her porridge and looked more than usually innocent. She heard his words, but her thoughts hovered over one of the ships moored in the East River, on board of which had long been confined the man she loved, and her imagination was busy, as it had been a thousand times before, as to his life, his surroundings; was he ill, hungry, might he not be thinking of her at that moment? A gentle sigh escaped her.

"What is the matter?" asked Peter.

"Nothing; I think I got up too early."

"Do you want a beauty nap in the morning as well as before midnight?" asked Peter, indulgently, his suspicions dispersed. "Make up for lost time after dinner. I don't think there'll be any more fifes and drums around again to-day."

On the dark hulk anchored in the East River, whither Elizabeth's thoughts had fled, another Fourth of July celebration was in progress. Robert, who had

just recovered somewhat from the ship's fever, had some days previous proposed that the anniversary should not pass without some recognition, and he had taken active lead in what preparations they had been able to make. Almost a year had passed since he had leaped lightly through the low window, leaving Elizabeth with a gay laugh and a careless wave of the hand, and the horrors of his imprisonment were plainly visible. In common with all his comrades in that world of concentrated misery, he had sunk far below a normal physical standard. Pale and emaciated, the change in him was startling, but his weakened frame and hollow eyes were no different from those of his companions.

He too had wakened early that morning, though not to the stirring notes of fife and drum, and he had tossed restlessly long before the light crept through the barred air-ports. The atmosphere was, as usual, poisonous, for they were closely confined between decks with the hatches closed and the sickening odors were sufficient to cause illness in any healthy man.

It was not long after daylight when the prisoners were permitted to go on the upper deck, though not until after the "burying gang" had gone ashore with the dead, to put them in the shallow trenches on the Long Island shore, in full view of the ship. There was more than the usual amount of sickness on board; the heat prostrated many in their weakened state, and

smallpox had recently raged, so that a number lay helpless on their ragged cots, too weak to raise a hand or take the slightest interest in any attempt at recreation. The sick prisoners on board the *Jersey* were supposed to be removed to the *Hunter*, the hospital ship, but the ship's surgeon had brought the word that the hospital quarters were crowded, and thereafter his professional zeal had cooled so that for some time his visits between decks had been few and far between. As a matter of fact in a prison colony that averaged about a thousand souls, the sick and dying were always with the living, so that it was no uncommon occurrence for a man to miss a friend for a day or two, without knowing anything in particular of him, and on inquiry be told that he was dead and buried.

But there was nothing unusual on this morning of the Fourth. Those who were able to be up had performed the regular tasks with something like alacrity. The dead had been sewed up in blankets and taken ashore; the decks had been swabbed down, beds and bedding taken up on the spar deck and spread out to air in the sunshine; hammocks had been hung out of the way, every inch of space between decks had been swept and scrubbed, and with the opening of the closed hatches and the entrance of a current of air into the polluted atmosphere, even the sick revived a little.

When the messes were called in rotation by the cook that morning, and the day's allowance passed out to them through the narrow aperture where all were given their scanty rations, Robert had received the food for his mess of six, and as they went into the Gun Room, the apartment by common consent set apart for the use of those prisoners who had been officers, he said: "I'm glad to celebrate with cooked food for a change; that raw stuff has been a little too much."

Matthews, a grizzled old Major, who was the oldest of the mess and very fond of Robert, sat up with difficulty and silently gazed at the unsavory portion set before him. It was a two-thirds allowance of a seaman in the British Navy, and on that day it consisted of one pound of biscuit, one pint of oatmeal and two ounces of butter, but the bread was mouldy, the oatmeal only half cooked, and the butter so rancid that only men in the extremity of hunger could swallow it.

"Try to eat," urged Robert, looking anxiously at the haggard face of his friend. He searched among the fragments of bread until he found a piece less mouldy than the others and placed it before him. Matthews ate a few mouthfuls in the wordless acquiescence which was common to all.

"I have little faith that we will be permitted to do anything out of the ordinary," said a man near

Robert. He was fearfully marked by the ravages of smallpox.

"Oh, I think you're mistaken, Barrett," replied Robert. "Nothing but a few songs and a little bluff at cheerfulness, just to show them that we are not dead, not but what we're likely enough to be, of course, but there's no harm in showing what little mettle we have left. I think the guard is to be Hessians to-day."

"No; that's why it's pretty certain to go against us. I caught sight of them when I was at the water cask just now, and they're Refugees."

The announcement cast gloom over the party, for the men preferred either the British or the Hessians as guards to the hated Refugees. Then Matthews roused and said: "Well, they've already done about all they can to us. We'll give them another chance."

"Oh, we'll be all right," said Robert, with more confidence than he felt. "Ryan, where's that juice we got from the sutler?"

A little Irishman, who still had the remnants of a once bright and expressive face, went to a chest in the corner of the room and brought out a jug which he placed before Robert, his action being followed eagerly by the sad and sunken eyes turned on him.

"There are not enough tin cups to go around," said Robert, "but we can take turns. This is a little sur-

prise, got up by Ryan and myself, for the benefit of all of us. We will drink a toast."

He poured some of the contents of the jug into a cup and handed it to Matthews. The older man took it and wafted it under his nose as if suspecting that it might not be the desired fluid. Then his expression changed.

"It's the real stuff," he said. "How did you manage?"

"I got some money from home on one of the bum boats the other day, and Ryan had a little too, and we fixed it up with the sutler for this occasion. He's suited himself about the measure, though." He screwed his eye to the mouth of the jug and shook it. "It'll last for a couple of small rounds," he said, "and that's as much as we can expect."

He had been pouring into the tin cups, and now all were served with the scanty measure. Robert lifted his own and said: "To liberty!"

In a silence emphasized by every wan face, the cups were touched and passed. A little wine or stimulant was a rare boon, as it could only be purchased from the sutler at an exorbitant price, and it had been weeks since any of the famished group had tasted such refreshment. The bum boats were a closely guarded but highly prized method of communication with the outside world, as the prisoners were per-

mitted to send by the men who brought them for money or for small supplies, tobacco, pipes or sometimes a little tea, but the guards delivered the messages, and the search of all articles delivered was too close to allow of letters being smuggled. A Long Island fisherman who knew Robert and the Captain of one of the bum boats had managed to obtain word of his condition and send it to his mother, and through him she had sent the money. It was the first touch with life he had had since he had been brought on board, and when he had wrung from the surly guard the news that all his family were alive and well, he could have wept for joy. It was the impetus from this inspiring and unexpected piece of good luck that had led him to propose some celebration of the day.

Under the livid skin of Matthews there rose a darker tint as the unaccustomed liquid warmed him. He looked gratefully at Robert, but said nothing until all had drank the toast, and then taking the cup again he said: "To our loved ones!"

This time no man passed the cup with dry eyes. The bitter sweetness of that draught sunk deep into the well-springs of life, and each one was sorely shaken. Many months of misery and semi-starvation had encrusted them with that terrible degradation of mind and spirit which is a living death. Yet, sick, almost starved, humiliated, denied the common decen-

cies of life, they were still men, and in their melancholy companionship this touch of patriotism and of the humanities, kindled the smouldering spark until it leaped up and burned in the sad eyes, softened the hard lines of mouth and brow, and put new vibration into the tones of those who spoke.

After a brief interval they drank to the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental forces, and then, the scanty draughts in which they had sipped their toasts having run dry, they prepared to go on deck as soon as permitted, and several of the number cleaned the Gun Room, carefully put away what few belongings they had in the chest in the corner, and not only locked it, but left a man to watch it, for thefts were numerous. News of the intended celebration had filtered through to the foreign colony, who were chiefly quartered on the lower deck, and as the officers' mess came out of the Gun Room and gathered near the hatchway, many dark, strange faces were seen appearing from below, and the men talked in various tongues and gesticulated violently. Some of them looked as if they had survived every variety of human suffering. The faces of many of them were covered with dirt; their long hair and beards were matted and unkempt; some scarcely had their nakedness covered with a few filthy tatters, that hung on them loosely and flapped scantily about their bony bodies. Many of these unfortunates were

merely seamen captured on merchant ships, and were thus disposed of so that the vessel could be seized.

With the grateful rush of the fresh morning air when the hatchways were opened, the men went above, and within a few minutes the upper deck was crowded. The ship's officers were on the quarter-deck, as usual, and armed sentinels were stationed on the gangways on each side of the upper deck leading from the quarter-deck to the forecastle. These gangways were about five feet wide, and here the prisoners were allowed to pass and repass. The intermediate space from the bulkhead of the quarter-deck to the forecastle was filled with long spars or booms, and was known as the spar-deck. A barricade extended across the front of the quarter-deck, and projected a few feet beyond the sides of the ship. This was about ten feet high and was pierced with loopholes for musketry, in order that the prisoners might be fired upon from behind it, if they attempted escape. The ship's crew had no communication whatever with the prisoners. Neither guards, officers nor any of the crew ever came between decks, save on a few occasions, nor were the captives hardly spoken to from week to week, except to receive orders or be cursed. Only about half a mile distant lay the Long Island shores, radiant now with summer foliage, but the freedom that smiled on them from those green hills was mocked by the guns that

covered them. The chance of escape was reduced to an inappreciable quantity, yet at times it had been discussed in every possible shape.

On the spar-deck the prisoners were allowed to walk, and as there were about a thousand on the *Jersey*, and the space small, the men formed platoons, each facing the same way and turning at the same time, and on this morning places were eagerly sought.

The significance of the day was at once made apparent to the guards, for Robert and a friend about his own age by the name of Sheldon placed in a row along the booms thirteen small national flags. Their appearance was the signal for three cheers, which the men gave with a good will, but, though the guards were sullen, they gave no further sign, and affected to ignore the demonstration.

There was but little men in such a situation could do to make a celebration, and its value consisted chiefly in the increased vitality and cheerfulness which permeated the groups. In their almost total isolation from the outside world they knew not how the cause fared, for all reports given them by the guards were purposely false, yet, in the mysterious way in which news can travel, it was reported that Howe and Washington had had lively skirmishing in New Jersey, and that the objective point of both armies was Philadelphia. Robert begged Matthews to try to take some exercise,

and with him on one side and Sheldon on the other they joined one of the platoons on the spar-deck and walked up and down. Matthews had been so ill that they had despaired of his life, and he was still weak, so they did not walk long, and after several turns they sat on the deck and talked.

They were deep in a discussion of Washington's possible movements when a man's clear voice on the other side of the deck rose in one of the popular patriotic songs of the day. He had not reached the end of the first line when he was joined by scores of other voices, and the men sang verse after verse with relish. When that was ended there was some hand clapping, and then another voice started another song. The marching platoons joined in and kept step.

"God!" said Robert, throwing back his head, his eyes big with uncurbed passion, "I've been on this accursed hulk for nearly a year, and that's the first cheerful sound I ever heard here." He looked across at the wooded expanse that lay so temptingly before them and said: "Oh, I *must* get away."

Matthews gave him a long, warning look. "Don't get that madness in your head, my boy. Others before you have tried to get away, and they lie over there." He nodded towards the bulging mounds within full view where lay the bodies of the dead.

"One might as well be there as here," said Robert, bitterly.

"No; it is better to be alive—for our loved ones."

He had hardly spoken when one of the guards called out: "Take down these dirty rags." He prefaced the command with a vile epithet and finished with an oath, pointing to the row of flags on the booms, where they were gently fluttering in the breeze. His words were addressed directly to a small party of men who were sitting near him, quietly conversing. Not one moved. The guard repeated the command, this time with a threat. Silence had fallen on the entire company gathered on the deck, and no one looked as if he heard. With an outburst of profanity, several of the guards attacked the flags, tore them loose, hacked them with their bayonets and flung the tattered bits on the deck and into the water. Robert, whose blood suddenly reached the boiling point, would have jumped up and ran to them but Matthews and Sheldon held him down, and Matthews spoke sternly:

"Be quiet. There is nothing we can offer but the silence of contempt. See!"

A change had transformed the men. Each one sat silent and motionless, looking straight beyond and apparently unheeding. They had suffered many petty brutalities only to learn that safety lay but in non-resistance.

Robert sank back with a deep inward groan, and through his clenched teeth came a curse. "Brace up," said Matthews. "They can't destroy what the flag means."

CHAPTER X

I Will Live!

LOW monotones of conversation were gradually resumed, and a subdued murmur began to go around. Robert had thrown himself down on his back on the deck and lay staring up at the sky, while Matthews attempted to comfort him.

"Follow the line of least resistance. Nothing is easy here, but anything is easier than kicking against the pricks."

"I'm done for," said Robert, in a tone of despair. "I have no strength left."

"That's where you are wrong. You have probably never had as much strength as you have now, only you don't know it."

"Who should know if I do not?"

"Those who know you better than you know yourself. With your nervous organization you would have gone under long ago and been carried out to the beach, if you had not had sufficient vitality to resist to the end. If you don't hold on to yourself you'll miss the secret of life, and you'll be dead so long you'll never have the chance to find out."

"In the name of God," said Robert, in a deep, bitter tone, "how can you think me anything but what I am—a wreck! I have tried to keep up, tried to hold out, but it's no use. This is hell upon earth, and I'm sick of it. I wish I were dead."

"You think you do, but you'd call your own bluff if you were put to the test. Are you more a wreck than any of the rest of us? Look around you. We are all but human skeletons, starved, degraded, poisoned in mind and body by this unspeakable environment, but we have not fallen from grace yet. Think, Robert, in all this time, daily invited to enlist in the King's cause, offered freedom, a commission, honor and reward, not one man has ever deserted; not one has ever turned traitor. Every insult that man can invent has been heaped upon us, and we are helpless, but our ranks are firm. Yonder lie the bodies of our former companions, who have died for the cause. The time will come when their bones will be collected, when their rites of sepulture will be performed, and posterity honor those who have died in vindication of the rights of man. Our jailers may call us human vermin, but we are beyond their power, and they know it. When a people are made free many must die in loathsome ways, and we are penned here like rats in a trap, to die by inches, very likely, but at least we can die like men."

"I said I was willing to die," said Robert, "and you tell me to live, and then you speak of death."

"True; it is about the surest way to make one want to hold on to life. Choose well now, on the instant, are you willing to die before you rise from the deck?"

The formless despair of Robert's mood defined itself into sharper issues. Into the void of apparent hopelessness there crept faces, voices, the swift hint of personalities, the ties of family, friends, a towering figure and grave eyes which he knew belonged only to the Chief, and something warmer, more beautiful than even these—a woman's young and lovely face—he could have sworn there was a light touch on his brow. He looked fixedly at the sky without speaking.

"Very well; would you purchase life by going over to the enemy?"

"Damn them, they may ——"

"Never mind that. You're all right, if you'd only think so."

"What are you driving at anyway?"

"Only this; most of us will die before we get out of this, but you are not to be one. It is your destiny to leave the *Jersey* and fight again, so save yourself for it."

"You can bank on it, Rob," said Sheldon. "Matthews is our official prophet."

They sat without speaking for awhile, each occupied

with his thoughts, and then Sheldon said: "I think I'll go below and get that hogshead stave I found floating in the water the other day when we buried Carver, and we'll cut it up. We are about out of enough wood for our cooking, and our mess would soon be boiled in the Great Copper."

"Heaven forbid," said Robert. "All that has saved us thus far is that we have somehow been able to do our cooking separately, until the last few days, and I can't stand much more of it. Bring the sharp straight little knife out of the chest, John."

Robert sat up and Matthews resumed his pipe. To be able to cook their own meat was a privilege eagerly sought for by the prisoners. All the cooking was done in what was known as the Great Copper, an immense receptacle under the forecastle, enclosed in brickwork about eight feet square and large enough to hold almost three hogsheads of water. In one side of the enormous vessel the peas and oatmeal were boiled in fresh water, but the meat in the other half was cooked in the salt water taken from alongside the ship, and much of the illness on board was caused by the poisonous effects of this. It was possible to purchase a little wood from the cook, but not enough to supply the demand, and it was the custom of the "Burying gang" when they went ashore with the bodies of their comrades, to try to procure any fuel they could and bring

it back with them for the use of their mess, and thus they gathered loose boards, barrel staves, bits of wreckage, all of which was received by their companions as so much treasure and carefully hoarded. Afterwards it was split up into sticks about four inches long, and the length of time a certain number of sticks would last was reduced to a mathematical calculation.

The fresh water for the cooking was saved out of each man's scanty allowance, the guards allowing each one only a pint at a time. To speak of it as "fresh" was little more than mockery, for although there was plenty of good water both on Long Island and in New York, the necessary supply for the men, about seven hundred gallons daily, was frequently short, owing to the indifference of the marines whose duty it was to bring it on board, and they were frequently compelled to use that stored in butts in the lower hold of the hulk, after it had run through a leather hose. The butts were never cleaned, and the foul sediment in them so polluted the water that hundreds of deaths were caused by it, as the men would drink it when half crazed by the tortures of thirst. Robert's mess had always avoided it, and though all of them had been ravaged by disease, none had yet died.

The cooking was done, after wood and water were procured, by suspending kettles containing the meat from hooks driven into the brickwork by which the

Great Copper was enclosed, a little fire with the precious sticks of wood being made under the bottom of the kettles, and each mess jealously saving the small brands that were left. A kettle had to be withdrawn instantly at the sound of the cook's bell, and it was policy to conciliate him if possible, for he had been a prisoner, and after being assigned to his commanding position, had become autocratic and surly, and in sudden fits of rage was wont to throw blazing embers at the men.

"We are reduced to the amusements of infants or old women," said Robert, as they sat carefully cutting up the stave. "Think of sitting here and whittling away at this. Oh, for the delight of swinging an axe at the roots of a tree! Think of chopping down an oak! Think of seeing the chips fly and smelling the odor of the wood every time you brought the axe down!"

"Why don't you chop up the ship?" asked Sheldon.

"It would be murder," said Matthews. "The several hundred species of the genus cimex inhabit it. I am on terms of more or less familiarity with all of them, especially the cimex lectularis."

"I always thought you a man of refinement," said Robert. "One's intimate companions are a pretty sure indication of inherent tastes. Have you noticed anything of the kind, John?"

"Never saw any. The Major must have cultivated them."

"If they were properly trained they might be useful. I think there are enough of them to haul the ship upon the beach. They could walk off with it easily if they would only get together. The trouble is sectional differences; they divide up too much."

"If you would get your hypothesis down to a working basis," began Robert, "it might help to settle your board bill, even with your extravagant extras. You have been luxurious about your laundry, and lavish in the use of fine wines and tobacco, and have clothed yourself in costly raiment when the rest of us have had to hold our rags on us to keep ourselves covered, and it seems to me that you might——"

He was interrupted by a commotion behind them. The prisoners had gradually returned to something like the original spirit of the day, and by degrees after the flags were destroyed had resumed their conversation, while parties again took turns in walking in platoons. Just now several men had approached one of the sentinels stationed on the gangway, and at the point of the bayonet had been forbidden, with curses, to walk on the usual passageway for the rest of the day. In the regulations made by the prisoners themselves, chiefly as a protection against the rough and lawless element inseparable from such a captive community,

it was expressly forbidden for any man to provoke the guards, to refuse to obey an order, or to offer any violence no matter what the provocation. These restrictions were especially necessary, as it was always in the power of the men to seize the guards and throw them overboard, but the guns would instantly be turned on them from behind the barricade, and an indiscriminate slaughter would ensue.

Despite this, a number of the prisoners were always at the point of revolt, and, being utterly reckless of consequences, were likely to make trouble at any time. Robert saw that one of these men, Kester by name, instead of heeding the order was ready to attack the guard. Those with him promptly turned back, but Kester's tall, bony form was drawn up in a menacing attitude.

Robert sprang to his feet with an alacrity of action he had not known for months and grasped Kester just in time to keep his blow from striking the guard, who drove at him with his bayonet point, and missed his would-be assailant only to graze Robert's hand enough to make a scratch.

"You have made enough trouble lately," said Robert, angrily, to Kester. "Have you taken leave of your senses? Apologize."

A round of profanity from the guard was his answer, and Kester, sharply prodded with the bayonet,

was ordered below. As he disappeared down the hatchway the guard turned on Robert and said, sneeringly: "I'm much obliged to you for saving my life. I don't know how we'd get along without you."

"I regret I cannot return your compliment," said Robert. "As to saving your life, that was not my object."

With a deep imprecation the guard turned away, and Robert returned to Matthews and Sheldon. "I think there'll be more trouble," he said. "They will get ugly now."

His prediction was almost immediately fulfilled. All the prisoners were forbidden to pass along the gangways, and the drawn bayonets were a sufficient reinforcement of the order. No one else attempted it, and scarcely had the excitement caused by the incident passed when as if by a common impulse, the men began singing again. The melody seemed to clear the surcharged air, and as the last line was finished cheers ascended. The hilarity was fatal. There was a heavy tramping of feet, the extra guards were turned out, and in the confused clamor that arose the hoarse and dreaded command was shouted for all to go below.

"Hold on to the wood, Major, and get down as quickly as possible," said Robert, "while John and I get our bedding."

There was not a moment to lose. The instant the

prisoners heard the order and realized that they would at once be forced between decks several hours earlier than usual, pandemonium broke loose, and it seemed as if there would be a fight of the most desperate nature. A violent uproar filled the air; both prisoners and guards were cursing; the weak and helpless who were being trampled on in the sudden rush, cried out and begged for mercy, but without being noticed.

The guards came on the run, with fixed bayonets, and drove the men before them to the hatchways, wounding many and pitilessly striking any within reach. Several in their haste to get below fell down the hatchway, and were injured by the mad rush that followed them. Much of the bedding and clothing of the men which had been brought up for the regular airing was left behind for the night, as only the more fortunate succeeded in getting their belongings. Robert and Sheldon got theirs and joined in the rush below. They were among the last ones down, and they had scarcely reached the Gun Room and found Matthews when the harsh grating of the hatches came to them and they knew that they were fastened in for the night.

Matthews sat on his bunk, pale and panting. "I had the wind nearly jammed out of me," he said, "and I've lost a couple of sticks. There were twenty-two, and here are only twenty now."

"Never mind," said Robert. "Here is your blanket."

"Listen!" said Sheldon. "Hell has broke loose."

Apparently he was right. The indiscriminate uproar that came to them had that savage and indescribable quality of a mob. The men were maddened by being suddenly thrust into the nauseous atmosphere which they loathed, and they gave way to profane and untrammeled rage.

"Give me the wood," said Sheldon. "I'll take care of it, and I'll see if Barrett will let us have enough sugar for our tea to-night."

"This is awful," said Robert. "It is only four o'clock. There are nearly four hours of daylight yet. Oh, the night! The night!" He shuddered.

Matthews did not speak. Robbed by sickness and the terrible privations of their life of most of the physical attributes which six months before had made him a strong and handsome man, he still retained more of humanity than did most, and his influence was marked. He was old enough to be Robert's father, and he had cared deeply for him from the time he first saw him. His affection was returned, for it was he who had spoken first to Robert on board and told him to cheer up. Now he lay back on his bunk, his face pallid and drawn, his eyes closed, the bones of cheek and brow sharply defining the outlines of his countenance, which

even under the ravages to which soul and body had been subjected, betrayed nobility and tenderness.

Robert, drawn from his gloomy contemplation by the lack of a response, looked at Matthews and was shocked to see that he was almost in a collapse. Too well he knew there was but little he could do, but he lost no time in doing that. He ran for water, poured some between his lips, dampened his forehead and chafed his hands. In a few moments Matthews, without opening his eyes, said: "I'm better, thank you."

Robert sat on the bunk by him. The noise of the men was dying out. Many of them were already engaged in eating the miserable evening meal, for, although the days were long in the outer world, darkness came soon to the unhappy colony on the *Jersey*, and after sunset no lights were allowed. The time dragged slowly along. Matthews, although he revived somewhat, seemed too weak to speak. Sheldon came back and said to Robert:

"I don't know how we'll live till morning. We were driven below before we could get our allowance of water, and no one has any to divide."

"How much have we?"

"About two pints for six of us."

"Well, divide it into equal portions, and take half of mine and give to him." He nodded towards Matthews.

"You'll need it yourself, Rob. There's a little tea he can have. We will give him that and keep the water."

The air grew more insupportable, laden with fetid vapors and rendered almost unbearable by the heat. They got Matthews to drink some tea and swallow a few bites of bread, and then a thick gloom settled down and night came for the prisoners, although without the world was radiant with the glories of a glowing July sunset. Comparative quiet succeeded the noise and excitement of several hours past, but only for a brief period. The men began to sing again. What protests were made were drowned out in the volume of sound that ascended. The guards passing to and fro on the gangways, stopped to listen. As the dusk thickened into darkness the demonstration increased. It seemed as if every man on the ship were singing.

It could not last. The inevitable command was shouted down to them to desist. Some obeyed; many did not. The singing continued, and was interspersed with sporadic cheers. The efforts of those who tried to induce their comrades to relapse into a more prudent silence met with no success.

It was about nine o'clock when the climax came. The grating of the hatchways being removed caused even the most reckless to pause, for never before had it occurred after they were shut down for the night.

The door of the Gun Room had been closed, but the shrieks that came to the occupants told only too plainly that something unusual was occurring, and Robert opened it. The terrible cries of men being wounded in the darkness came to them. The guards, with bayonets and cutlasses, had descended and were cutting and slashing indiscriminately, as far as they could reach. They had brought no lights with them, but descending to the lower deck laid about them with force, striking out in every direction and wounding every man who fell within range of their weapons.

In the panic that ensued the prisoners fell back as far as their crowded condition would permit, but there was no escape for those who could be reached by the guards. The wounded fell on the deck, crying out in pain and terror, and being trampled under foot by the frightened men who vainly tried to escape a like fate. This time the guards said but little. They omitted even the customary curses, but made up for it by the violence of their attack, and the unfortunate men, helpless before this onslaught, and in the extremity of fear, cried in vain for mercy. Not until the guards had struck all within reach did they desist; then, as their leader said: "Perhaps you will be quiet now," they withdrew to the upper deck and closed the hatches once more.

The horror of that night will not bear repetition in

detail. The meagre supply of water gave out, and the tortures of thirst were added to the heat of a sultry summer night. The groans of the wounded, the imprecations of the stronger who fought for a mouthful of water or a place near the few air-ports, the mingling of oaths and prayers, made up an inferno seldom equaled. Those who succumbed before morning died without a pitying word, a drop of water to cool their parched tongues, or a breath of fresh air to fan their temples.

No one slept on that night, save those who became exhausted and fell into a stupor. Matthews seemed to be sinking. He was unconscious part of the time, and Robert could hardly discern the heart's action by placing his head on his chest. There was nothing he could do, and in helpless misery he sat on the bunk or restlessly paced the short strip of space in which he could walk. He was beginning to suffer from thirst, for despite his efforts to make the water of his share last, he had drank it all, and his mouth and throat were parched. He stood it as long as he could, and then, in desperation, started for the door.

"For God's sake don't go out there," said Sheldon, holding him back. "It isn't any better anywhere, and the men are mad."

"So am I," replied Robert, tearing himself away. "I want water! Water!"

He felt a cup pressed to his lips in the darkness, and a draught trickled down his throat. Realizing the full import of Sheldon's act, and revived by the liquid, he said: "John, oh, what have you done! You have thrown your own life away!" He groaned.

"No; I'll get along all right," said Sheldon. "Perhaps they'll give us some water after awhile."

"The brutes want to finish us all this time. There's no hope. I must try to get a breath of air. If I live I'll come back."

Slowly and with the utmost difficulty and danger, Robert fought his way through the struggling mass of humanity to a position he had sometimes taken before, at the grating of the main hatchway, where a faint current of air circulated through the bars. He finally got a place on the larboard side of the hatchway, facing the east, and the extremity of his suffering from the heat was somewhat relieved by the fresh air that entered, though his thirst still parched him.

Around him were the dead, wounded and dying, the sick and helpless, all the living crying out in the agony of burning throats, and thus he passed the rest of the night, watching the procession of the stars through the narrow grating, and fighting with the last remnants of his strength against the thing he feared most, the dethronement of his reason. At last, by an almost superhuman effort of his will, he succeeded in fixing his at-

tention on a star whose soft whiteness held his eye, and crying out within himself: "I will live! I will live!" over and over, he became conscious that he would not give way if he could compel that idea to remain. Life! Life! The thought resolved itself into a tangible shape, and even in the intensity of his physical torment the star seemed to smile on him with the smile of Elizabeth. Time and again he felt his brain reeling, and his senses floated in a dim chaos, but every time the face and the smile reappeared, and though repeatedly he slipped down into some black and empty space, a spark stayed alive in him and brought him back to life. When morning came he went back to the Gun Room and lay on the floor, until Sheldon was able to procure a small drink of water for him. The hatches were not raised until ten o'clock, and for the next twenty-four hours no cooked food was served the prisoners.

CHAPTER XI

There Is No Way

LATE in July Mrs. Fitzmorris brought a retinue of servants from Philadelphia and went over on Long Island to her Flatbush house, and there she entertained all the rest of the summer and into the autumn, making her establishment a sort of social headquarters for British officers and her Tory friends, and under cover of a lavish hospitality laying plans that constantly brought Rutherford and Elizabeth together.

To Peter and Mrs. Hardy she avowed her intention of making the match, and if appearances counted for anything she seemed likely to do so, for she held the reins completely and Elizabeth found it impossible to escape the clever schemes which made them constant companions. Peter's spirits rose under these flattering prospects, and he privately informed Rutherford over the wine that the girl would probably see her damned foolishness now, and hearken to his suit. But Elizabeth did nothing of the kind, and Rutherford had difficult wooing. When the season ended Mrs. Fitzmor-

ris was compelled to admit that her campaign had been a failure, but, determined not to be balked, she accompanied Peter to New York to remain until after the holidays.

In December, Peter went up into Westchester County to see 'Squire Elliott, and on the day before Christmas he had not yet returned. Late in the afternoon when Elizabeth said that she was going to the house of a friend and departed with a basket, her aunt had no suspicion of her errand.

"She is the most stubborn case I ever saw," said Mrs. Fitzmorris to Mrs. Hardy, as the girl went out.

"You don't seem to be making much headway," replied her companion. Mrs. Fitzmorris walked to the window and looked out: "I wonder where she is going. Sometimes I think that I don't know all of her movements."

Had she followed Elizabeth her horror would have been unbounded, for she walked through the lightly falling snow to the most dreaded prison in New York, the old Sugar House on Liberty Street, where hundreds of Americans were British prisoners.

It was not the first time Elizabeth had been there. Often before she had managed to convey to the unfortunates some food, wine, clothing, writing material or other relief, and her face was almost as familiar as that of Deborah Franklin, the devoted Quakeress, who

continued her ministrations to our men until she was banished from the city.

The Hessian sentry on duty at the great, barred door on Liberty Street grunted a surly greeting as he admitted her and she entered the gloomy and forbidding bastile. But even his eyes fastened with admiration on her glowing beauty, and as he noted the delicate wreath of white where the snowflakes rested on her hair, he muttered to his companion: "The prettiest little rebel wench that ever comes in here, but she's a fool to waste her time on such lice-eaten beggars."

When Elizabeth had made the rounds of that dreary place and had left a trail of brightness by her coming, she paused on her way out to bend over an emaciated figure lying on a filthy pallet of straw on the floor, while he painfully gasped a message to his wife in her ear. Through one of the port-holes in the deep walls there struggled the dim yellow light of the dying winter day, throwing the man's sunken features into sharp relief. As Elizabeth leaned over him and softly smoothed the hair back from his forehead, whispering assurances of compassion, Deborah approached and laid her hand on the girl's shoulder.

"God bless you both," said the man, brokenly. "You have made my last hours happy. I shall soon be like him." He looked towards a still, stiff figure lying on the floor only a few feet away, a form that

would be carried out in the dead wagon in the morning.

"Thee must not give up hope," said Deborah, gently. "Thy wife and children need thee, and if thou keepest a stout heart thee mayst be restored to them."

"Time to leave," said a guard, roughly, swinging a small lantern before the women's faces. "There's too much coddling in here," he added, with an oath.

Deborah took Elizabeth's hand in hers. "We are going," she said, with calm dignity, "but, friend, I grieve to hear thee use the name of Christ profanely on His birthnight. Thinkest thou thy mother would be pleased to hear thee use such words?"

The guard started, then, abashed, he hung his head and silently and respectfully attended them to the door. Out in the fresh air, away from the fetid odors of the jail, Elizabeth caught her companion's arm convulsively.

"Oh," she sobbed, "think, Deborah, it is Christmas Eve! Oh, it breaks my heart to think of our poor men in there, cold, sick, and dying! And my own Robert! Even now he may be dead!"

She leaned heavily on Deborah, her limbs trembling under her in terror. "Courage!" replied the Quakeress. "Thy Robert was a strong and brave young man, and he would live for thy sake. Come, we must hasten."

They walked faster in the rapidly deepening twilight, but they had gone but a few steps when a heavy hand on Elizabeth's shoulder halted her, and a voice of authority said: "Not so fast, miss. You're to come with me and see Captain Cunningham. He wants a word with you."

"Cunningham!" said Elizabeth, drawing away. "I have done nothing for which he would wish to see me. I am Miss Windham, and my uncle is——"

"That won't do," broke in the Sergeant. "You're under arrest and you come right along without any fuss."

"I will go with thee," said Deborah. She slipped her arm within that of the girl, and in silence the three traversed the streets to Cunningham's headquarters, the Provost, afterwards the Hall of Records. In this dreaded prison were confined the more prominent civil, naval and military prisoners of the British, and Cunningham, the Provost Marshal and a fiend incarnate, delighted to parade the guard when citizens of distinction were brought before him, and with the clanging arms, the unbolting of heavy bars and locks, the rattling of chains and his own brutal authority subject the prisoner to every possible humiliation.

Two sentinels at the door admitted them, and they stood before the Celt. He was drunk, as usual, and in an ugly mood. Around him stood several guards, and

the faint illumination of candles only threw into more forbidding perspective the dark corridor beyond.

He leered impudently at Elizabeth. "I've heard of you," he said, sneeringly, "and I'm about sick of the lollipop you deal out to the cattle we've got in here. They're too well treated, that's what's the matter with them, and when it comes to a lot of wenches coming in here and weeping and slobbering over them, it's time it was stopped. Do you hear?"

"Sir," said Elizabeth, her heart almost jumping out of her breast in the violence of her agitation, "I assure you I have not done as you say. I have only brought in a few little things to relieve the sick."

"You've brought more than that," replied Cunningham. "Do you see this?" He pointed on the table before him to a small saw and a file. "These were found not half an hour ago hidden in the straw of a man you had visited. Escape! Ha! He'll be out of here before morning, but it'll be at the rope's end in the yard. O-ho!" as Elizabeth turned to Deborah with a cry, "that's all the good you've done. I've a mind to lock you up for bringing them."

The sick terror of Elizabeth's soul was transformed into the energy of a proud and insulted spirit that had never known humiliation. She drew herself up and faced Cunningham haughtily. "I did not bring them,"

she said, "and I desire you to let me go at once. You have no right to detain me here."

"What!" cried Cunningham, while the guards fairly shook in their boots. "What! You defy me, you huzzy! I have a way to tame such as you."

Elizabeth's blood was boiling with the epithet he had applied to her, and she took a step forward with the air of a duchess. "There is no way," she said.

Cunningham beckoned a guard to him and said a few words. The man disappeared in the dismal corridor and in a moment returned with a haggard looking young fellow clothed in rags. Cunningham played the card he had held in reserve. "This man," he said, "was exchanged from the *Jersey* the other day, and this evening he was arrested for being concerned in a plot to burn all the ships in the Wallebocht and let the men escape. This letter addressed to you was found on him, and he says it is from Robert Dalrymple. Of course it is about this vile plot, and I'm going to open it and read it."

The anguished wail that burst from Elizabeth's lips would have moved the compassion of any but such a brute. Even the hardened guards looked cautiously at one another in disgust.

"Sir," said Deborah, "thou art mistaken in thinking the maiden brought in the things of which thee

accuses her. Wilt thou not let her have her letter and depart?"

"Silence!" thundered Cunningham, making a motion to break the seal.

"Sir!" cried Elizabeth, frantic with conflicting emotions, "sir, for the love of heaven, I beg of you not to read that letter. There is no plot in it. 'Tis but a private note to me. Oh, let me have it!" She held out her arms beseechingly, sobbing convulsively, her pale cheeks and staring eyes speaking of her agony.

Cunningham smiled in derision. "I'll just see what little plans your lover is laying," he said, "and when I find out what they are I'll send some men over to help him."

Elizabeth darted in front of Deborah to the prisoner, whose eyes had not left her, and grasping his hand she cried: "Oh, tell me, is Robert alive and well?"

"He is alive," said the man, "and though he has been sick he is better. He sends you his love, and bids you be strong."

"Oh, thank God!" faltered Elizabeth.

Cunningham had sprung to his feet with a terrific oath. "Take him back and put him in irons," he ordered. "I'll teach you," he added, turning to Elizabeth, but before he could finish the door swung open and Captain André and Colonel Rutherford entered.

Elizabeth flew to them. "Oh, take me away!" she implored.

Rutherford, astonished, supported the girl on his arm saying: "I will escort you with pleasure, Miss Windham, but why are you here?"

"Don't be in a hurry, Rutherford," said Cunningham. "She's here by my orders."

"Captain Cunningham," said André, saluting, "may I inquire if there is anything I can do for Miss Windham? Perhaps there is some mistake."

"There's no mistake about this letter from Dalrymple to her, and I'm going to read it."

The blood mounted to André's brow. He was a gentleman, and Cunningham's coarseness disgusted most of the British officers. "Sir," he said, "may I suggest that as it is a private communication you give it to Miss Windham? A love letter is scarcely contraband of war."

Elizabeth's blush gave Rutherford a jealous qualm, but he felt like striking Cunningham, who covered Elizabeth with a look from which she shrank. The Provost was so drunk that he was taking on a jovial edge. He bowed uncertainly. "I'm always polite to the ladies," he asserted, "especially when they're young and pretty. I only wanted to scare you, miss, to teach you a lesson, and I ought to lock this letter up, but if you promise not to come here again I

may give it to you. What do you say, Rutherford?"

It was a hard moment for the Colonel. He was madly in love with Elizabeth, and he would have given much to destroy the hated missive, but while he hesitated, as torn as Othello, Elizabeth's soft voice uttered a plea.

"Oh, Colonel Rutherford, say yes! Do you forget? It is Christmas Eve, and Robert's letter is the only gift I wish." She clasped her hands and fixed her lovely eyes pleadingly on his. He yielded, no man could do less, and said: "By all means let Miss Windham have her Christmas gift."

The Provost got out of his seat with some difficulty, and steadied himself while he attempted to hand the letter to Elizabeth. Before her trembling hands could grasp it a rush of cold air from the opening of the outer door filled the room, and, heralded by a vigorous announcement that he must see Cunningham at once, Peter Simpson came striding in and crossed the room with great steps. The sudden current of air blew the letter out of the Provost's hands, en transit to Elizabeth, and with the perversity of things inanimate it fell directly at Peter's feet. He picked it up, unheeding the cry that fell on his ears as Elizabeth fled towards him.

"What does this mean?" fairly roared Peter, as his

niece clung to him sobbing. "Elizabeth, why are you here? And this!" He looked at the writing. "What! A letter to you from that puppy! By heaven!" he turned to Cunningham, "can I believe my senses? Why is my niece here in this place, where no one but ——" he paused, his eye falling for the first time on André and Rutherford. "Gentlemen, I bid you good-evening. This seems to be an unusual holiday-making, and not of my choice." He turned again to Cunningham, and with voice and manner of authority said: "I demand to know the reason of this proceeding at once. Answer me, why is Miss Windham here?"

Peter Simpson was a man to sober even the Provost. His brain had cleared a little, and he dimly realized that he had been much confused by the fumes of liquor when he sent his henchmen for Elizabeth, being urged to the act by the discovery of the letter. He knew now that he had gone too far, and he knew too that it would be hard to placate Peter.

"Miss Windham is free to depart," he said, "perfectly free, I assure you, and ——"

"Free to depart!" shouted Peter. "Free to depart!" He laughed sardonically. "I'm much obliged to you for your permission. You're only too glad to have her depart now that I'm here. She will go with me without delay, and if she's been here without good

cause you shall answer for it. Now, for the last time, I ask you why?"

The Provost grasped within himself at such remnants of his power and authority as presented themselves to his mind at that critical moment. The ill-concealed contempt of the guards and officers penetrated even his coarsened senses.

"You need not excite yourself," he said, "you forget that nowadays we sometimes find treason where least we expect it, and it is my duty to guard against it. You hold in your hand a letter to your niece from Robert Dalrymple, a prisoner on board the *Jersey*, and I received information only an hour ago that it related to a plot to burn all the ships in the East River and let the men escape, and Miss Windham was merely sent for to be questioned regarding it."

"Oh, Uncle Peter, it is not so, it is not so!" said Elizabeth, passionately. "He accused me of bringing in a file to a man in the Sugar House, and he only threatened to read the letter to tame me, as he himself said."

Cunningham gasped. André and Rutherford exchanged significant glances. Elizabeth was no longer a terrified and helpless girl, but once more the petted beauty, who knew herself under the protection of an able-bodied guardian. Cunningham, who had only the ideas of a brute about women, had looked to see her

swoon on his account of the letter, and his heavy jaw dropped aimlessly as he saw her turn her lovely, tear-filled eyes beseechingly to her uncle. Peter scowled threateningly.

"I'll keep the letter," he said. "I'm as good a judge of treason as you are, Mr. Provost, and a better of manners. If there's a plot in this letter you shall know it within the hour, and if there isn't it will be safe with me. And, hark you, sir, the women of my household are not to be invited to your jail drawing-room in future. I answer for them and their conduct, and when you have complaint to make it is to be made to me."

He looked inquiringly towards Deborah, who throughout the scene had stood quietly, watching all without a sign of perturbation. "It is Mistress Deborah Franklin," said Elizabeth. "She came hither with me when I was arrested."

Peter winced at the last word, but bowed formally to the Quakeress. "I am under obligations to you, madam. Permit me to escort you home with my niece."

"One moment, Uncle Peter," Elizabeth's voice rang out clearly. She drew herself up, and with flashing eye and accusing finger pointing directly at Cunningham, she said: "He dared to insult me. He called me huzzy." As she uttered the word a wave of crim-

son rushed over her face, and her chaste young body fairly burned with the shameful epithet that had been applied to her in the presence of the rough guards. André and Rutherford were speechless, while even into the dove-like eyes of the Quakeress there came a brighter gleam.

Cunningham started back, terror-stricken, and not a moment too soon, for with an inarticulate cry of fury Peter sprang at him and made a sweeping blow at his head with a heavy walking cane. Two of the guards rushed in between them, and warded the stroke enough to make it descend on Cunningham's shoulder with sufficient force to make it lame for several days. At the same instant, for the sake of avoiding violence before the women, the two officers laid hold of Peter, who was breathing heavily, his face purple and his brow covered with huge drops. For a brief moment, in the arrested action, there was a tense silence in the gloomy room, broken only by the hoarse respirations of the two men, Peter glaring furiously and the Celt, chilled to the heart with fear, cowering like any craven. Peter was the first to collect himself.

"Release me," he said, and after a hurried, whispered admonition from André, they did so, while Cunningham shook himself loose from the guards. Peter spoke in a voice rough with rage and contempt.

"The reason why I do not have you apologize to my

niece on your knees for your insult is that you are a piece of carrion and not fit to speak to any decent woman. You will answer to me with your life if you ever so much as look at her again." He turned to André and Rutherford: "Gentlemen, remember you dine with us to-morrow. I bid you good-evening." He offered Elizabeth his arm.

"Good-night, Deborah," said Elizabeth. She curtsied to the officers, and swept Cunningham with a look of scorn. Rutherford and André bowed deeply, and André said to Deborah: "Madam, let me escort you home," an offer which the Quakeress courteously declined, and while Peter gave unwilling ear for a moment to Cunningham's tardy protestations, Rutherford whispered in Elizabeth's ear: "I wish you a merry Christmas. To-night I shall write you a love letter in place of the one you have not yet received."

"Spare yourself the trouble," replied Elizabeth. "It is quite certain that I shall read it before I sleep, and then I shall forget all the other letters in the world. Gentlemen, a merry Christmas to you."

CHAPTER XII

At Army Headquarters

RUTHERFORD had found to his chagrin on the next day that Elizabeth had indeed been given the letter to read. As the price of the concession from Peter she had to let him read it first, but fortunately it proved to be only a few lines, scribbled in pencil, breathing love and fidelity and saying nothing of any plan to burn ships and attempt to escape.

An unprecedented storm had broken on her head when on reaching the house Peter had thoroughly gone to the bottom of the whole matter, Elizabeth's unsuspected visits to the prisoners in the Sugar House and her disposition of Peter's choice wine, her determination to associate with "rebels," even if she had to go into jails and be arrested to do it, and, if these high crimes and misdemeanors were not enough, to have letters sent her from the very stronghold where nothing was supposed to escape. Peter was furious with the episode of the evening, and the fact that he had protected her from Cunningham in nowise diminished the wrath he visited on her for her actions. Mrs. Hardy and Mrs. Fitzmorris joined in with violent re-

bukes, horrified beyond words that such a scandal had originated in their staid and conservative household, and the commotion that raged in full force for over an hour made a memorable Christmas Eve for the girl. Peter's ordinary outbursts were only skin deep, and frequently went no further than a few sporadic oaths, but his fury on this evening was of a different order, and for the first time Elizabeth trembled.

At last she had promised not to go to the prisons any more, and then, her overtaxed nerves giving way under the strain, she burst into tears and cried out: "Oh, I am so miserable! Please don't scold me any more!"

Peter relented. He drew the sobbing girl gently on his knee, and with grave authority had soothed her, and then, because it was the evening of the holiday he had always made a red letter day for her, he had given the note to her, after making sure that it contained no deadly plot. This latter, indeed, was not an idle fear, for such a plan was several times thwarted while the prison ships were used. Mrs. Fitzmorris and Mrs. Hardy were thoroughly scandalized, and remained unreconciled to Peter's gentler attitude for some days. Elizabeth's life was made a burden to her, and it was with joy she saw her great-aunt depart for Philadelphia, accompanied by André and Rutherford.

Elizabeth had recovered her poise during the night, and when she appeared at dinner on the following day and greeted the guests, she was in radiant spirits, and fairly bloomed with joy. The few tender words she had received from Robert, the assurance of his unbroken affection, had exhilarated her with the elixir of life, and she was so buoyant that Mrs. Fitzmorris cast more than one disapproving glance at her.

Rutherford had no occasion to be flattered by her treatment of him. Under the keen espionage of Peter and the two women, Elizabeth was obliged to make a show of great pleasure in his society, but she cut him in a woman's subtle manner, and made him feel that André was more agreeable to her, and André, though he carried the miniature of his own faithless sweetheart in his bosom to the day of his death, had a warm and romantic appreciation of women, and he gallantly threw himself into the breach and devoted himself to making an impression until Rutherford would gladly have spitted him.

Late in the afternoon, when the women had withdrawn after dinner and the men were alone with their wine, Peter had explained how a letter had been conveyed from the *Jersey*. After all the vigilance of the guards it had been done in a simple way. When the exchange of prisoners had taken place the men who were to go had been carefully searched as usual, and

when nothing had been found on them they had been escorted to the head of the accommodation ladder whence they were to descend into the small boats where, with guards from the *Jersey* and the officers, who had come with the transfer papers, they were to be taken ashore. At the last moment Robert, pretending that he had forgotten to send a small list of things to be purchased, ran up to one of the guards and asked permission to give it to some one. The guard saw only the names of a few articles and granted his request, and Robert had palmed the list and slipped into the hand of an officer the little note. The exchanged prisoner had taken it in charge to deliver, as he had a permit to enter the city, but he had been arrested within forty-eight hours, and Elizabeth had happened to visit the Sugar House that very afternoon.

"It shows what can happen," concluded Peter, "and it is quite evident that a stricter watch should be kept. It should be impossible for such a thing to take place."

"You are right," replied Rutherford, with sincere unction. "It is almost incredible that a trick like that could be worked under the very eyes of vigilant guards. I shall report the matter and you may rest assured it will not occur again. That fellow Dalrymple is a dangerous man, at liberty or otherwise."

"He is clever and unscrupulous. As for the guards,

I can't say I think they were so vigilant. There might be an improvement in that respect."

"I have offered to write Miss Windham a letter every day if she will show as much anxiety as she did about this missive," said André. He had slyly tantalized Rutherford all through the dinner, and enjoyed the fun he got out of it.

"I could wish," said Peter, "that the letter had indeed been from you, sir. I assure you that if you write I shall not insist on reading it first, as I did this one."

Rutherford got no satisfaction from Elizabeth before he left the house that afternoon, and between her gay and coquettish mood and the quiet jibes of André he was inwardly chagrined before he made his adieux. He kept his promise to Peter to report the matter to such good purpose that the entire prison colony was for weeks subjected to a more rigorous treatment than usual. Of this Elizabeth knew nothing, and she also had her fears as to the real condition of Robert's life considerably relieved, for he had said in the note that he wanted for nothing and was well!

Mrs. Fitzmorris left a few days later, after first delivering a severe lecture to Elizabeth, advising her of the evil of her ways, and counseling her to accept Rutherford's attentions in the spirit in which they were offered. Privately, to Peter, she said that the

girl seemed to be on the road to ruin, and that the best thing to do would be to hasten Rutherford's courtship by every possible means and get her safely married before she would precipitate an open scandal of some kind.

André and Rutherford, making their farewell calls, urged Elizabeth to accept Mrs. Fitzmorris' invitation and come over to Philadelphia, where she would have a round of gayety even better than in New York.

"I assure you we have had very good times," said André. "We have given private theatricals and dances and assemblies and balls, and though you have had all these here you may believe me that they have not possessed the true flavor, for at army headquarters we are better able to entertain. You must come over, Miss Windham."

"I am going to have her come soon," said Mrs. Fitzmorris, answering for her, "and I will give a ball for her."

"I speak for the first dance," said Rutherford to Elizabeth.

"And I for all the rest," said André, "so your card is full now."

Before Rutherford came back it was the end of February, and there was a hint of spring. At the patriot headquarters at Valley Forge there had been something like festivity since the arrival of Mrs.

Washington, and the attempt at social life had been quite successful. The Chief's wife was installed in a log addition, built expressly for her, and it had a rude comfort of its own, quite adapted to Mrs. Washington's simple tastes, for though she was a stickler for the forms of social etiquette, she had not the discernment in many household affairs that he had, and his wonderful genius for detail was fully displayed in the minute directions he always gave, usually in writing, to his secretaries, clerks and butlers as to the disposition of draperies, pictures, rugs, and all bric-a-brac, and the china closet was his particular pride. He knew the pattern of every dish, and after the Revolution, when he became President, a great deal of the old family plate was melted and made over in a less massive design selected by him.

Lady Stirling and the vivacious Lady Kitty, the wives of General Greene and General Knox, and two daughters of Governor William Livingston were additions to the group at headquarters and with the French gentlemen of rank who had joined the army and the great Steuben, Frederick's famous disciplinarian, life was somewhat relaxed from the terrible severity that had prevailed during the early days of the winter. A number of dinners were given, and the Chief unbent considerably under the mellowing influence of his gay and active young staff officers, who left no stone un-

turned to make life enjoyable, both for themselves and their guests.

Steuben was the wonder of the camp. He was of princely bearing, and was richly dressed on all occasions. He had been the intimate associate of potentates and noblemen, and the half-frozen, thinly-clad men of the rank and file were divided between awe and fascination. When he arrived, accompanied by an imposing suite of aides, one of whom was Major L'Enfant, he and his party were objects of intense interest. As the brilliant cavalcade swept through the little village of miserable huts where the American army was encamped, the wind flapping the tattered outfit of many, and the bare and frozen feet of others resting on the snow without covering, the cheers which fell on the ears of the baron were in marked contrast to the surroundings.

That evening he had dined at the right of the Chief, the guest of honor at a dinner in a log cabin, but with all the state of a formal function manifest in the viands and the serving, the presence of the women and the sparkle of jewels making a strange contrast of luxury and squalor, and the effect had drawn from him warm compliments.

Washington needed just such a man sorely, and he at once filled a place hitherto vacant. With all his dignity and imperiousness he was as practical as a drill

sergeant. He was up before daylight, and at sunrise was in the saddle, usually alone, as his methods were beyond most of his aides. He rode to the parade ground, and put the men through a manual of arms that made them pant for breath, and when their intelligence was not equal to that of his own—a disciplinarian famous in all continental Europe!—he swore at them. Swore roundly and profusely in French and German, then in inadequate English, and then in all three at once, while the stupefied squads helplessly twisted their bare toes in the snow. But he was generous, warm hearted and magnetic, and he soon acquired an ascendency over the men. He looked after them in sickness, supervised their treatment by the officers, took measures which improved their lodging, and, above all, he began to make real soldiers out of the almost hopeless raw material which Washington had to use, and taught them that it was their duty to obey and not grumble, for he drilled and drilled, mercilessly and profanely.

Tallmadge was at Valley Forge. He had known nothing of Robert for months. Then, early in February, he heard the story of the Christmas Eve episode through a letter written by Nellie Musgrove to her sweetheart in camp. Jennings read the letter, or that part of it to Tallmadge, and the latter told Washington that evening. The Chief listened attentively.

"I am sorry for Lieutenant Dalrymple," he said. "I just missed getting him exchanged on the last list, as his rank did not fit the requirements for the men we were to send back. The exchanging has been slow and unsatisfactory, but I hope to get him off of the *Jersey* this spring. If you send any word to Miss Windham, remember me to her with my most respectful compliments."

The Dalrymples, or the feminine portion, were at Flatbush that winter. The men of the household were scattered. Robert's father was with the army in Canada; one brother was stationed on Long Island and another had been sent South. His mother and two little sisters were once more at their former residence place, though not in their own house. They had old friends for neighbors, David Matthews, the Van Hornes, Augustus Van Cortlandt, David Clarkson, Jacob Suydam, Major Moncreiff, Theophylact Bachê and others as well known to the Royalists as they were to the "rebels." Sir Henry Clinton's expeditions sent from New York had greatly exasperated the citizens of all the surrounding country, and marauding parties, about as many on one side as on the other, were almost daily sent out and kept the country terrorized. New Jersey had been ravaged; Tarrytown and Dobbs' Ferry were overrun; the Hessians were plundering right and left; at Buzzards' Bay American

vessels had been captured, churches had been destroyed, villages pillaged, the flames of burning barns lit the sky by night, the British soldiery were guilty of robbery and rapine; storehouses and dwellings were ruthlessly attacked and destroyed and great quantities of sheep and cattle were stolen. It was a year of wholesale plundering, burning and sacking. The Tories complained of their own men. A noted Royalist in Dutchess County went over to the "rebels" because a party of Hessians stopped him in the road, unhitched his horses and took them and left him to get home as best he might.

In New York City the second year of British occupation was not as pleasant as the first. Even the wealthiest inhabitants felt the pinch of war. Peter could not collect rents. Some of his valuable property outside of the city had been seized and "rebels" were quartered in it. He had lost heavily by the great fire of almost two years since, and he was not as rich as when the rebellion had started, that "insurrection" which was to be put down within sixty days. Peter himself was more a Tory than ever, but his income was not so large, and his bank account was smaller.

Many of his friends were faring no better. The property of a number of Royalists fell into the hands of the colonists, and attacks and counter raids were so numerous that it was no uncommon thing for a house

to be occupied by a family of Tories one night, captured by "rebels" for the next and regained a few days later by another Tory party who would suddenly swoop down and drive the invaders out into the night.

The editors of the Tory newspapers, led by Rivington's *Royal Gazette*, published statements calculated to add to the prevailing spirit of insecurity and discontent. They declared that Connecticut was in confusion throughout her borders, that in Maryland only forty recruits had responded to the call of the Congress for more men; that fevers were raging in Philadelphia and other cities; that the entire South was weary of the struggle, and only awaited British succor to throw off the yoke of rebel oppression; that Boston was starving; that there was not a piece of silver money in all the Southern States, and that the rebel army "was such a set of miserable, ragged creatures as was never scraped together before."

In New York conditions grew worse and worse. On the site of the great fire of 1776 a strange village of huts had sprung up known as "Canvas Town," as the ruins left were covered with canvas roofs, with small tents pitched here and there, and temporary shelters of boards thrown together. Here were gathered the banditti of the town, dissipated soldiers, highwaymen, escaped convicts and tough characters of every description, and these were visited after night-

fall by disreputable women, and indulged in orgies and debauches that made night hideous. Respectable citizens remained within doors in the evening, or, if obliged to go out, were attended by a body-servant and a guard. The rich had lost much; the poor were in a wretched, poverty-stricken condition. In the old Dutch churches and in the Sugar House the prisoners starved, sickened and died, the dead being thrown into pits without any burial rites. The philanthropic attempted to relieve the distress of the prisoners, but many times an armed sentinel would turn back the proffered gifts of the charitable. Cunningham, the Provost, and David Sproat, the Commissary of Prisoners, amassed fortunes by stealing from the funds appropriated for the men.

No one, irrespective of party or rank, escaped the general sense of privation. The Crugers had lost six houses in the fire, Gerardus Duyckink seven, William Bayard six houses and stores, and Peter Mesier fifteen buildings. Gerardus Stuyvesant resided in state in the old mansion of the family, and his sons were prominent in local affairs. Frederick Philipse, the third lord of Philipse Manor, was generous and public spirited and gave freely to relieve the want of the poor. Andrew Hamersley, a vestryman of Trinity, did much good in an unostentatious manner. He had been extremely wealthy, but the war so impaired his fortune

that only the inheritance of an estate in the West Indies rehabilitated it.

Under these conditions, and with the additional drawback of a severe winter, the rest of the season went by. Elizabeth kept her promise to Peter not to visit the prisons again, but her interest in that subject was too acute for her generous instincts to be entirely suppressed. She continued her friendship with the noble and devoted Deborah Franklin, and found ways to convey to her a number of small delicacies which were distributed in the prisons. For it was a time honeycombed with currents and counter-currents; families divided and surreptitious methods employed by at least one-third of all the population, fathers and sons in the different armies, rebel sweethearts eloping with Tory lovers, and Royalist husbands watching wives whom they suspected of secretly favoring the despised and hated cause.

Elizabeth had comparative peace while Rutherford was out of the city. Other suitors came and went, but none gave her the trouble of pressing so far as her uncle's favorite had done, and she was thankful. But with Rutherford's return in February things were changed back to the old order at once. He had been reinforced in Philadelphia by Mrs. Fitzmorris, and at the first opportunity he had begged Elizabeth to marry him in the spring. He had met with refusal, and then

Peter had made a determined effort to change her wish, but in vain. Mrs. Hardy, after useless expostulations, declared that she was tired of the whole matter and would wash her hands of responsibility, though she did it in a way that did not make life any easier for the girl, as she was a woman who was an adept in the art of constant insinuation and suggestion that was like so many pin pricks.

Rutherford apparently paid no heed to her refusal, but continued to devote himself to her, and for the rest of the winter and into the spring she was obliged to accept his attentions and to endure his tacit air of the favored lover. Peter also intimated that in June she was to wed him, and so the time slipped along to April.

CHAPTER XIII

I Have Brought You a Gift

"HOW are you now, John?"

"Almost done for."

"No you're not. Brace up, man. Hold on a little longer. We won't be here forever."

"No, Robert, not forever, and I shall not be here long. I have wanted nothing but death for many weeks. Ah, Rob, think how sweet it will be, to be out of this pestilential hole, asleep in a cool, clean, dry place, tormented by no hideous sights and sounds, at the mercy of no thrice-accursed brute. Oh, the sand will feel good to me when the burying gang takes me ashore and shovels me under. Try to get on that gang, Rob, and don't bury me deep. I want to feel the rain trickle down through the earth on me and smell the air and feel the sunshine. Oh-h!" He stretched his long, bony legs on the tattered blanket and threw out his arms.

Robert leaned over the filthy bunk, and carefully squeezing out a little water on a rag from a small kettle he pressed it on Sheldon's forehead, whose eyes were bandaged, and whose face was swollen and

blistered. When he had asked the ship's cook for a light for his pipe that morning, the surly beast had thrown a shovel full of red hot coals in his face.

Robert was so shockingly changed that it was almost impossible to recognize him. He had survived the horrors of life on board the prison ship for a year and a half, and was a marvel to many in that community of wretchedness, where three months was said to be the limit most could endure before they succumbed. The resources of a splendid physique, a tenacious will and a determination to live for the girl he loved had sustained him through the appalling ordeal of captivity, tenfold cruel to one whose muscles ached for life in the open, for conflict, for action.

Nothing of misery had been spared him in that charnel house. While slowly recuperating from the effects of his wounds at the battle, he had been attacked by the smallpox, though fortunately it left him unscarred, and when, months later, after fighting with all his strength against the foul air, the impure water, the rotten food, the loathsome and degrading surroundings that seared his very soul, the ship fever had ravaged him, his companions thought him doomed. Yet he recovered, and, though fearfully altered, he had gained some mysterious power of resistance that did not again forsake him.

"I am *seasoned*," he had said to Sheldon, the cook's

victim. "There are degrees in hell, and I have taken them all. Now the worst is over."

He had conquered at a terrible cost. He had lost forty pounds, and his six feet looked painfully emaciated in the filthy garments that scarcely covered him decently, but his blonde head was still well set above his broad shoulders, and though the blue eyes were hollow and the cheek bones sharp, his face was still fine and expressive.

Day by day, in that human inferno he had seen his companions become brutalized until, descending through successive grades of physical and moral degradation, they had become lost to every sensation save the most hardened selfishness. Robert himself had been tainted with the same deadly poison that had sapped the manhood of many of his fellows, and through the long and terrible winter months, pinched with bitter cold, denied light at night, surrounded by fierce, gaunt creatures who became wolfish in their hunger and stole the last maggoty crust from a dying comrade, he had cursed God and wished for death. Physical and mental suffering tortured him until every sensation was merged in a peculiar stupor, and he existed for days at a time in an atrophied, semi-conscious condition, pierced at intervals by the two ideas that never escaped him wholly—Elizabeth and liberty! Robert had for a few days past felt a return of some-

thing like a little of his old spirit. It was spring and warm, but though the air was balmy its fresh odors could not penetrate between decks of the *Jersey* where he sat by his mutilated friend, for in addition to the fact that over a thousand men were packed like cattle on a ship-of-the-line that had carried four hundred men, the port-holes had all been closed, and instead two tiers of small holes, each about twenty inches square and ten feet apart had been cut in the ship's sides. These were guarded by two strong iron bars crossing at right angles, and through these apertures came some light by day, while by day and night they were the breathing holes, as the men were fastened down at sunset every day.

The *Jersey* was moored in the Wallebocht, or Wale boght, in the East River, on the site of the present Navy Yard in Brooklyn, about a quarter of a mile from shore, and as she swung sullenly, tugging at her heavy chain cables as if groaning with her polluted load, the pallid faces of the men could be seen peering from the air-holes, gazing longingly towards Long Island, now green with the first tender verdure of spring, or looking mournfully at the nearer view presented to their eyes, the significant piles of earth on the beach. New ones were made every day, and he who turned the sod for a comrade one morning might have his own pain-racked body laid by him the next.

The crowding of the men and the utter lack of any of the ordinary decencies of life defy description. It was an earthly inferno, with every bestial influence rife in the polluted air and reeking in the vermin-infested rags of the men. All were reduced to a common level of unspeakable degradation, save a few who by virtue of stronger recuperative powers and superior morale redeemed the mass somewhat.

Robert was one of these. He had been whelmed in torpor during the last months of the winter, but with the return of spring a faint elixir of life had once more coursed through his veins, and as day after day he saw the green on the Long Island shore grow and freshen, the madness that comes at least once to every captive with the glamour of reality, the hope of escape, became a fixed idea. Armed sentinels stood at the gangways; on the upper deck a bristling range of guns pointed to larboard. The captain and every officer of the ship were armed, and if the rash captive escaped bullets and death by drowning, there remained the prospect of starving in the woods or capture by the British outposts or dragoons scouring the country for fugitives. Yet he not only harbored the thought but had entered into plans for its completion, and it made an undercurrent in his mind as he continued his ministrations to John Sheldon, who had become like a brother to him. The sufferer stretched out his

cramped body as though already feeling the welcome embrace of the sod, and Robert said:

"I'll not be on that gang, John, for two reasons, you won't need me, because you're going to get well, and I won't be here. We're sawing through all right, and then I'll go. But I'll not forget you, John, you know that. I'll go straight to His Excellency and have you exchanged. God forgive me, it seems as if Washington and every one else has forgotten us, and leaves us here to die, but it won't last. The end is coming; I feel it." His voice had a peculiar reedy sound, from weakness, but in his blue eyes burned an unnatural fire. He was only as nearly sane as any man can be under the dominion of an impossible idea. The face of the burned man did not change. Swollen and scorched, it was fixed in hideousness, but as Robert gazed at it with stirrings of anguish it looked beautiful to him. Sheldon felt about with his hand.

"Where are you, Robert? Promise me something. Don't try to escape. Don't take your hand away. I mean what I say. It is different for me. I have nothing to live for. I've told you about it. When she married Charlie, my twin brother, there was nothing left for me. And next to Lucy, Charlie was the one I have loved the most. Somehow I always seemed older than he, and when we were little I used to give up to him, and it isn't any different now. 'To

him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken even that he hath.' I have nothing more left to give, but you, you, Rob, why, there's everything left for you! She still loves you, she is true to you, and you are the only man on board the *Jersey* who ever smuggled a letter to his sweetheart. And you talk of escape! Why, you ——"

Robert tenderly pushed back the hair from the forehead of his companion. "I wouldn't talk if I were you, John. Just keep quiet and try to sleep a little."

"I know what you mean, Rob. But you're crazy. Six inches of oak planking to saw through, every officer of the ship watching for plans to escape all the time, and a thousand chances against one for you to succeed. I've talked it all over with Matthews."

"I know, John, and so have I. But it's too late now, and as I've explained to you it's entirely practicable. We will wait for a dark night, a rainy one will be better, and then the ten of us will get away. We will strip and fasten our clothes in a tight roll on our shoulders, drop through one by one and swim for the shore and after we get there it will be every man for himself. I know the topography of the country perfectly, and have given full directions to each one. I tell you it's safe, John. Every man of us is a good swimmer, and you know yourself that bullets will fly

wild in the darkness. As for starving, there are roots in the woods and water, fresh water, in the springs. Why, John, think of stooping down and scooping up a handful of sweet water in your hands and drinking it! Cool, clean water, that has just run over a pebbly bed! And there will be a delicious odor in the woods, John. I know just how they smell this time of the year, and I will throw myself down on the ground and kiss the moss, and bury my nose in the wet, tangled vines, and take off these wrecks of shoes and dig my toes in the moist earth and roll over and look up at the sky through the trees and shriek for joy. And I shall find some violets, John, they must be blooming by this time, and I'll gather some to take to her—she loves them. John, the first time I saw her she was wearing a knot of them at her breast, and she looked ——" he choked. In the horrible monotony and degradation of their life the ordinary exchange of confidence between man and man had been so submerged in suffering that nothing approaching a natural interchange of sentiment had taken place between the friends for months. Now both were obsessed; one in pain, the other in ecstasy.

"Don't try it, Rob," urged the sick man, faintly. "This is hell on earth, but remember one thing, you're not dead yet, and if you try to escape from the *Jersey* you'll never live to carry violets to Elizabeth. Your

plan has been tried before, and all were either killed or brought back. Wait to be exchanged, for in time ——" he was cut short by a paroxysm of pain in his scorched face that made his bony body writhe like a snake on the dirty bunk. Robert watched him in silence. He could do nothing for him. When Sheldon had twisted himself up in a strange knot and from the heap of rags came only smothered moans, Robert went above and with others huddled on the upper deck partook of the only recreation ever permitted, the breathing of a fresher air than found its way between decks. He was one of the few who were able to purchase from Dame Grant the envied luxury of tobacco and to enjoy a pipe. The smoke somewhat purified the pestilential air by which they were surrounded, and was an inestimable boon, not only to the smokers but to scores who in hopeless silence watched the curling wreaths as they ascended heavenward.

Robert found his way near the larboard side and sat down by one of the men who was in the party planning the escape. It was late in the afternoon, and sunshine lay in slanting shadows on the Long Island shores and on the heaps that marked the trenches where lay the dead that were borne from the ship each day. A melancholy silence enveloped the wretched company as they huddled together in the brief relaxation of their misery. But few spoke; nearly all

gazed hopelessly out towards the land, while some turned their faces upward to the sky and vacantly watched the soft drifting of delicate, curling white clouds.

Robert and his neighbor carried on a short conversation regarding their plan, talking in a faint undertone and with the almost motionless lips learned in prisons the world over.

"Getting along all right?" asked Robert.

"Yes; five inches done now. One more and we can drop into the water."

"I was talking with Leslie about it this morning. He thinks we are in danger of being betrayed by Stephens or Merritt. Since the committee punished them for stealing the clothes of poor Thompson before he was dead, they have been sullen. We are all more or less brutalized. I think I have but few human instincts left myself, but ghouls cannot be tolerated even here."

"Human instincts!" echoed Barrett. "I've been nothing but an animal for a year, and I have but one sentiment left—self-preservation."

"I have longed for annihilation more than for life," replied Robert bitterly, "but self-preservation is not possible here, where every process of life is slowly stamped out, vitality disintegrated, decency destroyed. If we are betrayed," he paused for a full minute, then

added, "Well, all I ask is to be shot in the water. I'd like to be clean first, and these accursed bugs will at least be drowned."

"Yes," assented the other. "It's tough to be eaten by worms before you're dead."

"After the sawing's done," said Robert, musingly, "we will take the first rainy night. The thing's perfectly feasible, Hugh?"

"Certainly; and, if it isn't it's worth the trial."

They relapsed into silence. Each busied himself with thoughts that were a compound of hope and foreboding. The sun slid further into the west, and the lengthening shadows on the hillsides threw still darker shadows into the hearts of those who watched them. Not more than a quarter of a mile away lay liberty, the free open of the hill, wood and plain, and not far distant Washington had vigorously opened the spring campaign in New Jersey, but for these human shadows there was nothing but the recurrent horror of another night.

How long they sat there Robert, lost in sore reflections, knew not. He was faintly conscious of the caressing sweetness of the evening air on his face when he heard again the familiar warning that had rung on their ears with unvarying regularity every night at sunset: "Down, rebels, down!" The tramping of the guards and the oaths of some as they kicked the more

feeble who did not move quickly enough, recalled him to the present. He picked up the blanket of a lame and coughing man and assisted him down the gangway between decks. The grating of the hatchways as they were fastened, and the clanging of arms as the guard was changed reached him while he felt his way in the semi-darkness to Sheldon. The sick man's breathing was stertorous, and his blistered and swollen face felt hot under Robert's hand.

"Don't touch me, Rob! God! I wish it was over." He was a man of upright character and strictly orthodox in his religious belief, but in a paroxysm of pain he clenched his teeth and muttered a curse which perhaps the recording angel never wrote against him. Robert did not go into the Gun Room as usual, but lay on the deck by the bunk that his silent companionship might not leave his suffering friend entirely alone. The short dull twilight that filtered through the small, narrow gratings of the apertures quickly darkened into night.

If the pen can faintly depict some measure of the horror that obtained on the *Jersey* during the day, no adequate idea can be conveyed of the night. It was literally to be entombed alive. Darkness was absolute. Not so much as one candle was permitted for the sick. The imperfect current of air that circulated during the day when the hatches were open was shut

off, and the foul and strangling atmosphere claimed its victims ere every sunrise. Robert, excited, and with his brain more active than it had been for many months, was awake most of the night. At times he caught a glimpse of the stars through the air-holes, and, watching them, he fell into a semi-delirium of the imagination. In his mind he went over every detail of the contemplated escape, and, the vision becoming more definite as the night advanced, he felt himself swimming in the water, his limbs free and bathed by the suave waves, the zip of the bullets about him adding to the zest of the hour. He laughed as he imagined them splashing in the water around him.

Then he saw himself free once more in the woods, the soft, spongy turf under his feet and the stars sparkling through the tree-tops. Again before Washington, then with Elizabeth. The last thought pierced him with strange and violent emotions, and a terror lest some new and unknown suffering still awaited him stabbed him to the core. All around him men fought as they did every night, for a place near the air-holes, engaged in primitive combat in the darkness like vicious animals. The foul air became more poisoned, and the cries of the sick for water and the curses of the stronger panting for breath made the long hours hideous. Finally, when night was slipping

into the gray of the dawn, he fell into a confused stupor, from which he was awakened by the sunrise call of the guard: "Rebels, bring out your dead!"

There were three to be taken to the little hillocks on the shore. Robert assisted in sewing them up in their blankets, and after they were carried up to be lowered into the boats, he bent affectionately over Sheldon and said: "John, I'm going ashore and I'll try to bring you back a kettle of fresh water, if they will let us go to a spring."

"Do," said the sick man, eagerly. His eyes were still bandaged and his scarred face was more swollen than on the previous day. "I'll tell you what I want," he continued, "bring me a handful of sand. I can't see, but it will feel so good." Robert pressed his hand and hurried away.

Four prisoners made the burying gang, and each man was attended by an armed guard. They paid but little attention to their duty of burial rites. The four captives, overjoyed to escape from the polluted hulk, laughed and joked, and pointed good-natured jibes at their captors, who happened to be Hessians and in a lenient mood. Robert took off his shoes, the others had none to remove, and in an ecstasy of physical pleasure dug his feet in the ground as he walked, gathering up a portion of sand which he tied in a small

rag and stuffed in his pocket. It was an exquisite day; robins were singing and not far off apple-trees were in early bloom. Robert stretched his cramped legs in long strides and throwing back his head breathed deeply and drew within him a deep draught of warmth and sunshine. The ground under him seemed to send up mysterious currents full of life and vitality. He felt himself expand and something more potent than wine surged up to his brain. Digging the trench was a mere mechanical detail which had no relative bearing on his mood, on the glory of the day, the exhilaration of the south breeze and the rich, warm odors of the mould as they threw it up with their spades. He might have been a boy on a picnic for all heed he gave to the injunction of the guard that the trench was deep enough, and he told a gay anecdote as he gave a final smoothing to the newly turned sod.

Despite his prayer, the guards ordered them to march back to the wharf at once, but, once there, Robert so wrought on the leader that he yielded, not unwilling to be off himself, and for half an hour the men disported themselves in the warm light, fairly basking in a grateful relaxation which had been denied them for many cruel months when the cold had pinched to the very marrow of their bones, though truth to tell the bones had been nearer the outside

than decently inside. On the ship Robert went down at once, and hurried to Sheldon's bunk.

"John," he said, tenderly, "I have brought you a gift."

The sick man had rolled over, and his face was turned down.

"John, look here." Robert reached into his pocket and drew out the small package. "Feel of it, smell it—it will do you good." He put an arm around the silent figure and turned the face upwards. The wide-open, unseeing eyes looked not into his, but into the mystery of eternity.

As Robert gazed on the cold face, and knew what he saw there, the warmth of the sun, the freshness and vitality of the air that had seemed to fill his cramped frame and expand him with a new sense of life, oozed out of every pore. A chill shook him from head to foot, as a sickening realization paralyzed every sensation. One thought burned into his brain, this too, would be his end. To die! To die! Death! Death! The word took bodily shape, and formed itself into a phantom that rose in his tortured imagination like some demon born of agony and despair.

A pale, mysterious smile seemed to waver over the dead man's sunken features; the sightless caverns of the eyes beckoned strangely to shades peopled with wraithlike forms. It was Robert's hour of weakness,

and his firm will, his strong, sane mind, rocked to and fro under the stress of an obsession that temporarily whelmed him. How long he might have held the stiffening figure in his arms he never knew. Spiritually he had gone down into hell, and his soul was tormented as are the damned.

Out of that vortex of pain some rhythmic sound finally resolved itself into the voice of Father O'Brien praying. Robert's eyes, blurred by an unnatural strain, looked wildly at the kneeling form.

"My son," said the priest, laying his hand on Robert's shoulder, "come away. He is at rest."

Robert shook off the friendly touch as if it were a viper. "Curse you," he said, hoarsely. "He was my friend."

The priest's eyes filled with tears. He crossed himself and sadly regarded the distraught man. Matthews, who had been half dead for days, got out of his bunk and going to Robert attempted to draw him away from his gloomy contemplation, but in vain. His words seemed to fall on deaf ears. One of the battered wrecks of humanity that made the sum total of the brotherhood of misery cautiously came near, and, casting a careless look at the dead man, gazed enviously at the little pile of sand spilled on the deck. Then, seeing that Robert knew nothing that was transpiring around him, he stooped quickly,

scooped the sand up in his hands and scurried away.

As the day wore on they tried without success to get Robert to eat. He pushed the nauseous dish from him and in fierce, speechless silence sat through the long afternoon, his eyeballs burning and his dry tongue occasionally licking his lips. The arid day gloomed into a sultry, copper twilight, then thickened into night, and the moonlight gleamed through the port-holes, falling athwart the prostrate form of Robert lying full length across his silent companion. Exhausted nature had given way and the living and the dead slept together.

Fat, sleek rats slipped noiselessly through the trail of sand and over both unconscious bodies, but the soul of the dead man in Paradise was not happier than the soul of him who was not dead. For he dreamed of love. Ay, of love, that can make even a living hell a couch of roses.

CHAPTER XIV

Out of the Way

THE importunities of Rutherford during these long months had worn on Elizabeth sadly. Perfect physical health, bubbling spirits and an undaunted courage enabled her to withstand her lover's entreaties and the authoritative pressure of Peter. Nevertheless, grief gnawed deeply in her heart and the nervous strain of keeping up a cheerful appearance before her uncle grew on her so that when spring came the second time she clearly showed traces of the sorrow that lay at the roots of her life. Still, her cheeks were as rounded as usual, and her color, though more fitful, was as exquisite as ever.

Only a wistful look in the eyes and a pathetic droop at times of the sensitive mouth betrayed her inner suffering. When in moments of unusual plasticity the perfectly formed mouth and chin quivered a little, an angelic sweetness softened her face that would have tempted an anchorite.

The first sight of her had set Rutherford's blood running hotly, and ever since she had held his senses abjectly in thrall. Yet, though his desires were primi-

tive, the spiritual quality of her womanhood unconsciously controlled him through his higher nature when he was with her. Each time he left her he marveled that she was the first woman he had ever known whom he had not dared to take in his arms at the call of passion. But many times he had left her dazed and weak because the temptation of her lips had set him on fire only that he might pant in vain.

Then he would curse himself for a fool, and vow to have one embrace, one kiss, at their next meeting if it cost him his life. But, seeing her again and again, she was as unattainable as ever, and his chains were firmly riveted. Elizabeth's nature fairly rioted in the potency of the coquette, the sorceress, but in her sweet, high innocence her chaste constancy to her lover made of her what few beautiful women are at that age,—a fascinating saint. This undistilled sorcery tormented Rutherford. He had loved too many women to be attracted by anything insipid, and the man in him rose up and hungered for her to mate with him. But before her he was powerless to essay his usual arts. The ordinary—and extraordinary—cajoleries and flatteries fell unheeded; his most passionate pleadings for her love were received with prompt and outspoken declarations of her affection for Robert and her determination to marry no man but him; his offers of wealth and title had been scorned.

Once, driven to desperation by her coldness, he had lost control of himself and after painting a cruel word picture of Robert's situation had triumphantly declared that he could wait and that she would yet be his. The sting of her words in reply had smarted for days, and when she finished by ordering him from the room, forbidding him ever to seek her again, he had fallen on his knees and humbly begged her not to banish him. Since then he had redoubled his attentions, unwelcome enough, but Elizabeth had found by experience that the easiest way to pacify her uncle was to appear complaisant to his wish, and so she tolerated Rutherford, and while his compliments were gracefully and warmly uttered, she listened in silence, while her thoughts flew straight as the wings of a dove to that gloomy hulk off the Jersey shore, and always the same face rose before her. But, had Rutherford not been an unwelcome suitor, she might have cared for him, for he was cultured, magnetic and singularly companionable, popular alike with men and women, though his gallantries with the latter were little short of notorious.

It was but a few days after Robert had returned from the burying gang that Rutherford sat with Elizabeth in the parlor of her home, pressing his suit with his accustomed ardor, for the chase, instead of losing its zest, seemed to gain in appetite. It was an

exquisite April day. The warm, tender air that came through the open window bathed them both caressingly, and lifted the delicate fragrance of the lilies of the valley, Rutherford's gift, completely filling a large jar on the table. Even more spiritual than the violet, these fragile lily bells of spring eternally recreate love, clad in the garb of purity and moulded in an ancient symbolic form as old as the world. Through the window could be plainly seen the fashionable promenade, where panniers and ruffed petticoats, paint and powder, laced bodices and high heeled slippers, allured the satin waistcoats, the knee-breeches, the wigs and queues, the black velvet coats and all the frummery in which the sexes bedeck themselves that they may make what deceit they can on the purposes of nature were much in evidence. Under the soft azure of the April sky, and in broad daylight, they walked and flirted and whispered soft nothings, punctuated anon by side whispers in willing ears, making those little arrangements whereby carefully guarded maidens—and of the best families, forsooth—promised to give the anxious swain an hour or so of moonlight, by a judicious use of an early retiring hour and the discretion of trusted servants. In truth, the world was running along much the same as usual, and there was nothing remarkable about anything.

Rutherford had pleaded with Elizabeth for an hour,

only to be met with maddening refusals. By some peculiar witchery of her personality, he was seized with a tumult of the senses that well-nigh shattered his self-control. Her face was partly averted, but the play of the sunlight on her hair, the curve of her neck, the soft, enticing outlines of her body, from the crown of her head to the tip of the dainty little slipper that peeped out from below her gown, sent the red corpuscles racing through his veins. Long had he desired her, and she sat there—utterly remote.

"Elizabeth," he said, "what is it? What is the matter? It is not because you cannot love—I remember the first time I saw your face—but it is because you have given yourself over to folly, to a dream. Can you not realize by this time that there is nothing real in it? Elizabeth, you are wrecking your own life. I know I am no saint, no woman ever made me say so much before, but for you—for your sake, I can be all that a man should be. Elizabeth!" He caressed her name.

She shook her head slowly. Languor showed in the pose of her figure. "It is impossible that you should even know what love is yet," he went on, half angrily. "You think that you love this man, but he has not taught you what I can. Elizabeth! Elizabeth! My God, you madden me! You are an iceberg with a heart of fire, but you don't know it yet, and I could

find it for you. I love you as I have never loved any other woman, as I can never love another, and I can make your life more than any other man could."

He paused, scarcely daring to finish with the words that came to him. "More than Dalrymple, yes—I will say it at any cost. Child, you are throwing yourself away. Give him up; come to me—be mine. Think of all that will be yours if you will be my wife, wealth, a title—they are nothing to me. I care for them only to lay them at your feet. Elizabeth, I want you—I want you."

Inflamed with ardor he had approached her, and his voice panted in her ear, while his arms nervously reached out towards her. Elizabeth had never suffered his caress, and her look held him back as she said in a low, overcharged tone: "Colonel Rutherford, I hope this is the last time you will ever utter such words to me. You tell me I do not know what love is. Ah, do *you* know? Have you ever been constant to one woman as I have been to Robert for a year and a half, and that in silence, in absence, torn between hope and fear, weeping bitterly in the darkness of the night, fearing to see the light of another day lest the news should come that the one you love is dead; have you ever done this? Have you ever been tried as I have been tried? Have you been pursued, courted, flattered, sought in every possible way, to have your heart grow

nearer to the only one who can have it? Do you not know that to be separated from your love and know of his suffering, of his courage, of his untiring fidelity, makes him a thousand times dearer? Yes, yes, yes! Oh, how much more I love him to-day than I ever did before! Colonel Rutherford, you are an accomplished man of the world, and you tell me that I do not know what love is, but I tell you that it is *you* who do not know. No, you do not love even me! You want me, yes, but you would not suffer for me. Oh, wait, wait till you love in pain and loneliness, and then you will know what love is!"

Overcome by the violence of her emotion, the first outbreak she had ever permitted herself, she had risen and faced him pale but with an exalted look that struck a new sensation into Rutherford. He looked at her in silence, transfixed by her passionate words.

"Oh, will you not leave me," she said, wearily. "I love no one but Robert, and I will love only him, living or dead."

Strangely moved, Rutherford was on the point of replying when Peter's voice came distinctly to them from the hall. "She has gone out, you say? Very well. Go and find Colonel Rutherford at once and tell him to come here immediately. A number of prisoners attempted to escape from the *Jersey* last night, and all were killed or captured. Robert Dal-

rymple was shot and killed. Be careful not to let Miss Windham hear of it at present. I will tell her myself."

He opened the door. The terrible words had fallen into the silence as clearly as hailstones, and both Elizabeth and Rutherford had stood motionless, the eyes of each fastened on the other with immovable intensity. As Peter entered, the sight shocked him and he uttered a hoarse exclamation, for Elizabeth's face frightened him. Slowly she removed her eyes from Rutherford and, looking not at him or at either man, she stared into some unseen space, her lips open and her features rigid, her arms relaxed in an exhausted droop.

"Elizabeth!" cried Peter, in sore grief.

She looked straight ahead, unmoving. "Robert—dead," she said evenly. Then she fell, mercifully unconscious. Rutherford held her in his arms for the first time, and while Peter shouted for water and restoratives, he chafed her hands and murmured with tense lips: "At last he is out of the way. Now, my love, you shall be mine."

CHAPTER XV

Now Let Me Go

ON the stormy night when the last thin bit of sheathing that remained beyond the oak planking in the stern of the ship was removed, and the desperate men dropped one by one into the water, but few words were said by any one. No one knew but what they had been betrayed by some traitor, or whether the watchfulness of their guards had discovered their plans, and every man who went and every one who remained knew that there were heavy odds in favor of death.

They had taken every means possible in such a crowded community to preserve their secret, and had observed what precautions they could by imparting the plan only to such as it seemed likely they could trust, by hanging a blanket between the door of the Gun Room and the outer-deck, so that their work might not be noticed, and then they had worked as quietly as they could. Matthews was convinced that only failure would come of the attempt, and on the morning of the fateful day had, with tears in his eyes, tried to dissuade Robert from making the trial.

When he found that nothing could move him, he had relapsed into a melancholy silence, and when urged by Robert to give him some message to take to relatives and friends, he had only shaken his head.

It was evident to those in the secret from early in the morning that the time sought for had arrived, for with the first grim light of dawn through the airports there drifted in the cold rain and wind of an April Nor'easter, the skies shrouded in sodden gray, and the rain a fine cold mist that could chill to the bone. All day it slanted down, intensifying the misery of the men between decks with an unutterable depression that was augmented by more of physical nausea than usual, caused by the polluted air, the chill of starved bodies insufficiently clothed and shivering in the raw atmosphere, and the discomfort of being more than usually crowded, since it was too stormy for any to go above for the usual exercise.

It was a day hideously picturesque. The sick and the more feeble remained in their bunks and hammocks; many played cards, an amusement which had somewhat enlivened existence for a large proportion of the prisoners; a few of the more favored who possessed such luxuries as a needle and a bit of thread, beguiled the time by mending their rags.

Generosity was rare in that wretched colony. As has been written in one of the sad memoirs left:

"None of us possessed the means of beneficence or had any power to afford our companions any relief." But Robert fell heir to a needle-full of thread about the middle of the afternoon, and going to Matthews he said: "Look, Jack, 'tis a good omen. I shall be able to mend a rent in my raiment. Now I shall not blush when I emerge from the woods and ask a good dame at a farmhouse for a glass of milk. I shall approach whistling, Jack, and assure her that I have been training down my superfluous flesh for my health." He laughed oddly. In common with others of the escaping party, he was in a state of intense nervous tension. Matthews sighed deeply and remained silent.

Towards evening the rain increased, and poured steadily as the night advanced. As usual, all between decks was in darkness, and those who remained awake heard from time to time the "All's well" of the sentinel above. While there was no one who might be called the head of the little party, Robert was universally looked up to. His courage, intimate knowledge of the surrounding country and the fact that all knew him to be a favorite of Washington, had united to inspire the others with confidence in him. When the hatches were fastened down for the night and in the darkness to which their eyes were somewhat accustomed the ten found their way to the

Gun Room, the tension of the hour became almost unbearable.

The storm increased in violence, and beat pitilessly on the old hulk as she swayed and tugged at her creaking cables. The wind had risen to a gale and howled in screeching gusts what whirled by like the shrieking of lost souls. It penetrated crevices of the ship and sent in little eddies that fanned the cheeks of the men with flurries of air that made the nerves of all tingle—those who were going with the mad, sweet sense of liberty, and those who were to stay with a sickening apprehension. Against the barred port-holes the rain beat furiously, driven into gusts that at moments changed it into the staccato of hail. The atmosphere was heavily surcharged with electricity, and when a long, low rumble of thunder crept through the storm it broke the uncanny spell of silence that had held the group for almost an hour.

"It's a good night," said Robert.

Matthews, who had broken down earlier in the evening and cried like a child, had regained his composure. He sat by Robert with his usual paternal air.

"Yes," he said, with an attempt at cheerfulness, "it couldn't be better. The elements are entirely with you and the distance is not great."

"Less than half a mile," said Robert, "and many a

time I've swum a mile and came up fresh as a porpoise. Oh, we're all right."

As he ceased the wind, which had lulled a little, broke forth again in shrill gusts and its loud whistle as it swirled over the ship, was like wild, demoniacal laughter. The nerves of none of the party gathered in the Gun Room that night were over-steady, and as the minutes sped swiftly in the darkness towards the hour agreed upon, the tension was increasing until it seemed to more than one as if the very air throbbed with the waves of excitement that emanated from every poor human body cooped up there.

It was the last hour for those who were soon to take odds, and now, with everything accomplished save the final step, and with each man knowing that he deliberately took his life in his hands, an indescribable solemnity settled over all which nothing could shake off. From the farthest corner of the room came the gentle murmur of Father O'Brien's voice. Two of the escaping party were Catholics, and the good priest, who had heard their confessions that afternoon, was telling them of his mother, whom he had left in the old country.

"And when I get out of here, if I ever do, please God, I'll send for her," he finished.

"Come with us, father," urged one of the men. "Think how you'll envy us to-morrow when we're as

free as air, and you and all the rest are still dying by inches here in this hell-hole. Come with us; it isn't too late."

"My son," the priest's voice came to them singularly calm and even through the gloom, "I feel that it is God's will for me to stay here. In all probability I shall never leave the ship alive, and at my age it would be folly for me to attempt a feat that is hazardous even for young and strong men, such as you. It is the will of heaven that I should remain and offer such ministrations as are in my power to those who wish them. When you slip through into the water I shall kneel and pray for you until I am assured of your safety. Keep cool, my lads, and don't lose your nerve when the bullets begin to whiz about you. On a night like this they're likely to fly wild."

Near the new opening in the ship's stern Robert was holding a brief farewell conference with Matthews. The older man felt as if wild horses were tugging at his heart, for from the very first he had felt as if Robert were to plunge into a watery grave before his eyes. With forced composure he had conversed with him for some time, and now both knew by intuition that the hour had almost arrived. Through the opening, Robert having carefully removed the final thin sheathing that had covered it that day, both men could see dimly the dark sheen of

the water, and, as a flash of lightning for a moment illumined the night, they could plainly discern the wooded expanse of the Long Island shore.

Robert leaned further towards the aperture and took in a deep breath of the warm, fresh air that rushed in on the wings of the night. "Free!" he exclaimed, softly. "Free at last!"

Matthews felt something within him give way.

"Robert," he said, "Robert," and stopped. He heard his own heart thumping before he could go on. At last he spoke in a queer, jerky way. "I had a son once—I never told you—he was our only child, and he died. You have always seemed to me as if you were like him—grown up." There were intervals between the last words, and they came from his lips heavily. Robert could not speak. In the silence that fell both men felt the mystery of a deeper kinship than that of blood, and knew that their souls were knit together. But the sacred moment could not last.

Robert gently unloosed his hand from the almost painful grip that held it, and said: "In a few moments it will be time to go. I am going to call the men by name and be certain that every one is here and that everything is done in order at the last moment without any confusion."

"All right," said Matthews. "I'll stay here by

you and be ready to offer assistance if you should need any."

"Time," said Robert, in a subdued but distinct undertone. It was the signal. There was a little stir in the room, and in the almost total darkness several men moved forward.

"I must know that you are all here and ready to drop through in the order in which your names are called. No man is to crowd or hurry any one else in going, and in case anything happens no man is to hold another in the water. After you drop through the opening and we are fired on it is every man for himself, with no advantage to be taken of any one. Do you understand?"

"Yes," came in different tones.

"Very well. Gordon?"

"Here."

"Wilson?"

"Here."

"Barrett?"

"Here."

"Ryan?"

"Here."

When he had finished the significant roll-call he added: "It can now lack but a few minutes of the time. We are to go after the guard is changed at midnight. If any one of you wishes to stay, now is

your last chance to say so and let some one else take his place."

Silence answered him. Through the aperture which their hands had made Liberty beckoned. Freedom, riding on the storm and careening on the wild wings of spring, smiled out of the blackness of the night and whispered of home, children and friends, of the camp and field and a final escape from the oppressor. Not a man spoke or stirred. Those who were not of their company felt a blacker anguish seize them. To be left behind in this inferno! God! Yet they had chosen, for it had been agreed that only those who assisted in the work of sawing through should go.

While each was absorbed in his own thoughts a voice fell into the dark stillness. All recognized it as belonging to an old man by the name of Rossiter. In their miserable little community of suffering he had been more human than many others, and was known as one of the few who had not lost most of the decent instincts of humanity. Plain and unobtrusive, he had never attracted any particular attention, but he had many times ministered in his kindly way to those more wretched than he, and they knew his goodness of heart.

"You're going away, some of you, in a minute or two," he said, "and you don't know where you're going. You think you're going to swim right out to

freedom, and maybe you are. God knows I hope so, for your sake and ours, but it's only a chance at best, and I think we'd better all say a prayer. Kneel, boys, and say that old prayer you used to say at your mother's knee."

It was a ghostly company that bowed the knee, for, that they might be unencumbered in the water, each man was entirely denuded of his clothing, which was tightly strapped to his back in a compact roll. Shrouded in the friendly veil of darkness they were, and as the lightning flashed at intervals through the barred airports and through the one unbarred aperture and gleamed fitfully on the kneeling figures, the nudity of their white, starved bodies was more suggestive of disembodied spirits than of living men. As unconscious as so many infants, and with a strange inward returning to infantile innocence, they knelt and sentence by sentence after the old man repeated:

> "Now I lay me down to sleep,
> I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
> If I should die before I wake,
> I pray the Lord my soul to take."

The voice of the old man was softly lifted up as the subdued murmur died away, and he continued: "Lord, protect these our brothers who go from us now, committing their bodies to the water for the sake of liberty, and save them with the great salva-

tion of freedom. Yet, oh most merciful God, if in thy infinite pleasure it should be thy will that they should not escape, grant that they may find the yet greater freedom of immortality. And save us all, oh Lord, here and in the world to come, and after the sufferings of this life are over grant that we may all be reunited in the life everlasting, where is liberty forevermore." He rose from his knees and stretching out his hands in benediction said: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, now and evermore. Amen."

A livid trail of lightning illumined the group for an instant, and every man felt his soul swing closer to eternity. As the last word was uttered a strange stillness settled over the room. The wind had died down, but the rain still poured and beat heavily on the ship. There was a scarce appreciable interval before the call of the guard came to them:

"Midnight, and all's well."

In the darkness a few final, hurried farewells were said, and the men stepped forward. Robert stood on one side of the opening and Matthews on the other, and Robert called the names, while Matthews said a parting word of good cheer to each man as he slid through. They got out in good order, one after another, with no confusion, slipping away into the water like so many great white eels, each one making a soft

splash, but there was not one word or one exclamation from any one. Nothing but Robert's voice quietly calling the men by name, the silent approach to the hole, the dim outlining of a form for an instant, then the gentle gurgle of the water, and then another man, and so on down the list.

When the ninth man had slipped through and it was Robert's turn, Matthews caught him in his arms and embraced him convulsively, sobbing deeply in his chest, as strong men do when torn by agony. Only for an instant. Both men knew there was not a moment to lose.

"Let me go," whispered Robert, and Matthews released him and leaned trembling against the opening, straining his eyes in the darkness to see if he could follow the course of the swimmers. In the Gun Room there was intense silence. An indescribable suspense held every man rigid. For a moment only. Then there came to them the sharp crack of musketry, the spitting of rifle balls on the water, the dip of oars of the pursuing boat, and they knew that all was over.

"Oh, my God!" cried Matthews. "They will all be killed!" Shrieking Robert's name, he would have thrown himself through the opening, but he was held back by many hands. Father O'Brien jumped from his knees where he was praying and was one of the first to reach him.

"Stop, man!" he said, holding him forcibly. "You can do nothing. God help them." He groaned. From every direction came sounds of the commotion aroused on the ship by the shots. Every soul on board was instantly awakened, and every one knew that an attempted escape had been frustrated. Cries, groans, prayers and curses filled the air, a hideous pandemonium that added to the horror of the hour.

In the water the men were being slaughtered. With the firing of the signal gun from the upper deck of the *Jersey*, a perfect hail of shot was directed at the glistening track left in the water by the men as they swam off, and the pursuing boat was not only filled with skilled marksmen who fired rapidly and constantly, but the marines were attacking with hooks and heavy bars every struggling form that showed itself. The would-be escaping men had expected to be fired upon, but to be attacked in this manner was unexpected, and, thrown into terror and confusion, they made the frantic attempts of wounded and drowning men to save their lives. The lightning played on an awful scene, men crying out in despair in the blood-stained water, clutching each other with the madness of despair, and throwing appealing arms wildly towards heaven as they sank. Those who prayed for mercy at the hands of their pursuers were

denied it, and were answered by blows that sent them down to rise no more.

Robert felt his head swim when he heard the first shot, then he instantly collected himself and with desperate but cool and determined courage, struck directly for the shore. Fully alive to the deadly nature of the attack and pursuit, he nevertheless kept himself well in hand, and with every nerve and muscle under perfect control he propelled himself through the water with strong, bold strokes that gave him a good headway. He felt his spirits rise and a thrill shot through him as he realized that every movement of his body was carrying him safely beyond the pursuit that raged around him, when, to his horror, he felt himself clutched in a fierce embrace by one of the drowning men. Realizing his peril he shouted to him to let go, and vainly tried to disentangle himself, but his crazed companion only held the closer. Down into gurgling depths they went together, and Robert, mad now with the instinct of self-preservation, knew that one of them must die. When they came to the surface he saw red flashes before his eyes and felt his senses reeling. With a last effort he attempted to free himself, and felt the cramped limbs of the dying man fall away from him, but as he did so he knew he was struck in the left arm by a ball, and the shattered limb fell helpless, and again he was sinking. His

brain was in chaos; heavy weights seemed to draw him down into cavernous depths, but, as the water was closing over him for the second time, he dimly saw an object which he thought might save him. He threw out his right arm and grasped at it, and as he did so a bullet whizzed by him in the darkness, he felt a heavy blow on his forehead, and was unconscious when his captors drew him into the pursuing boat.

Only one other man besides himself was brought back to the *Jersey*. As the firing ceased and the dip of the oars announced the return of the boat, the tumult that had broken loose between decks died into an ominous silence once more. The prisoners heard the voices of the ship's officers above, heard the tramping of feet, and then the hatches were raised and Robert and another one, Barrett, were carried below by the guards and silently laid side by side on a couple of bunks, two naked, bleeding, ghastly objects. The guards bore with them what had never before been seen on the *Jersey* between decks, two candles. These were set on the floor by the captured men, that their faint rays might the more clearly reveal their mutilated condition to their comrades, and make the object lesson more complete. The plan to escape had been known to the officers almost from the first, though it was never discovered whether it was found

out through the vigilance of the guards or through the betrayal of some one of their own number.

In order to thoroughly impress the men with the hopelessness of any such attempts, the ship's officers had deliberately permitted them to complete their work, and then, knowing that they would choose a stormy night, they had stationed a boat at the ship's stern, and as soon as the last man was in the water they had opened up the pursuit, with the full intention of killing every one. They had succeeded only too well. The guards who carried below the senseless forms of the two men spoke not a word, not even the customary oaths escaped them. They turned away, ascended to the upper deck and closed the hatches once more.

Throughout the rest of the night such poor ministrations as the agonized Matthews, Father O'Brien, Rossiter and others could render to Robert finally resulted in a faint fluttering of breath across his lips as morning dawned. Barrett was beyond human help. The burying gang carried him ashore before noon of the next day, and left his bones to whiten in the heap on the beach. The others lay at the bottom of the river. Their souls had been ushered to their last account shriven only by the sacrament of Rossiter's plea: and in their watery grave, stained with their own life-blood, they had found "freedom in immortality."

CHAPTER XVI

For the King's Cause

IMMEDIATELY after the attempted escape the ship's officers, in retaliation, not only denied the prisoners what little liberties they had previously had on board, but they also isolated the *Jersey* from the limited communication that had been held with the outside world by means of the bum boats, whence on rare occasions a letter had been smuggled. For this reason it was almost impossible for the relatives of the prisoners who had attempted to escape to learn their fate. Indeed, in the confused and contradictory reports that had spread the names of at least an hundred men were used, and it was said that all had been killed.

Peter was almost distracted by Elizabeth's grief. He filled the house with her friends, and he and Mrs. Hardy ministered to her with the utmost solicitude, and in the days of her prostration that followed he left no stone unturned in efforts to discover the truth. Rutherford did the same. He left the house with his arms aching with the delight of holding her senseless form in them, and torn by such conflicting emotions

as are known only to a jealous and all but hopeless love.

It was not until the evening of the third day that any definite news was obtained, and then, unexpectedly, Peter and Rutherford met in a coffee-house on John Street, much frequented by the British officers and Tory residents. It was a cool evening, and a crackling fire of hickory logs in the great open fireplace blazed merrily and cast the light of its dancing flames far out into the room to mingle with the illumination of the tallow-dips, where both played in fantastic shapes on the rows of burnished pewter dishes that stood in serried array on the shelves. It was a homely but cheerful interior, and its low ceiling, small, leaded panes of glass and white sanded floor made a comfortable setting for the groups that sat at the small tables and indulged in the gossip of the hour.

Peter was one of a party of four, but though his companions were all old acquaintances and the entire company mildly convivial, it was evident that he was not in his usual spirits. Truth to tell, he had not much encouragement to be gay. Elizabeth was still prostrated by the nervous shock she had sustained; the widow Earle had openly flouted him in the market that day, and he had heard through an officious friend that she was looking with favor on the suit of a rival, one Dudley Leigh, a well-to-do middle-aged bachelor,

who had made the undisguised announcement that he intended to cut Peter out and marry her himself. And, as if all these matters were not enough, Paul Elliott, arriving that afternoon with a message from his father, had in a conversation with Elizabeth in Peter's presence avowed candid doubts as to the justice of the Tory cause. Restraining himself with difficulty, he had drawn Paul into a private talk in the dining-room before he left, and, to his horror and amazement, the young man had repeated his declaration.

Peter, of course, had lost his temper.

"Are you going to be another renegade?" he demanded, angrily. "You, the son of the most loyal Tory in Westchester County? Egad, sir, if you were my son I'd disinherit you!"

"So will father," said the young man, cheerfully. "I won't mind that. You see, I've been doing my own thinking about this war, and, to my mind, it's too much like fighting against one's own blood. You must admit, sir, that after all most of us have come of a common stock, and like a good many others, I'm beginning to think that we'd get along very well by ourselves."

Peter had been speechless for a full minute. Had it come to this! Was there nothing but mutiny, sedition and treason everywhere! Then he spoke:

"Young man, you are old enough to have reached years of discretion, but you are going to the devil. Common stock, forsooth! As if these beggarly rebels were anything better than the spawn of the Evil One himself, with their God-forsaken babble of liberty and independence. Shame on you, to harbor the thought of sympathizing with them. You had best mend your opinions before it is too late, for when His Majesty has crushed this insurrection and holds these rebels in the hollow of his hand, it will go hard with those who forsook his standard when he needed loyalty."

"By your leave, sir, he hasn't crushed it yet," Paul had replied, "and there are others besides myself who have serious doubts if he ever will. Mr. Washington's men in camp in Valley Forge have been half starved all winter, and their bare feet have left blood tracks in the snow, but their spirit is unbroken and they say they'll give us a tussel this spring. Men like that may not lie so easy in King George's hands."

Peter's color had deepened to its final Burgundy hue, an ominous sign.

"You will find out your mistake too late," he said. "Freezing and starving are quite good enough for all enemies to the King—and their sympathizers."

Paul had departed unabashed, and Peter, as he consulted his decanter, had damned all Tory renegades

mightily. As he sat smoking now a medley of talk went merrily on around him. On the table in front of one of the party lay a play bill, announcing an entire change of program for the next evening at the famous John Street Theatre, which was opened in 1753 and used throughout the Revolution. Richard III was announced, the cast made up entirely, as was common in those days, from officers of regiments stationed in New York City. Major Jack Hargrave, of the Fourth Artillery, as Richard, "in the most artistic impersonation ever given. Five shillings in the pit. To begin precisely half an hour after six o'clock, and no admittance behind the scenes. The management will positively enforce this new rule, as the officers cast for the female parts of late have been greatly annoyed by the unwelcome attentions of gentlemen admirers."

"No admittance behind the scenes," repeated Watson, who had read it aloud. "Ah, times have changed. I mind when seats were ranged on each side of the stage in Garrick's day, and all of us gay young blades who could crowd up there would press so closely about the fair ladies of the cast that sometimes they could scarce speak their lines. I remember one night in London when Peg Woffington was playing Juliet to Garrick's Romeo my chum, Spencer Worthington, just out of Oxford, became so enamored of

the lovely Peggy that he began to interpolate his own love-making, and he finally got so bold that, after being requested to desist and paying no attention, Garrick rushed at him, chased him off the stage and into the pit and out of the house, where he would have used him roughly, had not friends interfered. Alack! There's been nothing on the stage like Peg Woffington since her day. Gentlemen, here's to her memory." His toast was drunk with appreciation, and as they put down their glasses the speaker continued: "You remember those good old days yourself, eh, Peter?"

"To my sorrow," said Peter. "In these miserable times 'tis but a poor consolation to reflect that were it not for a pack of outlaws this country might come to some such a standing as England. Yes, I mind Peg Woffington and Garrick and all the rest of that noble company of those days in London and Dublin, and now, God help us, we have play bills thrust under our noses telling us that Captain So-and-So will play Juliet to Colonel Thus-and-So's Romeo, and no admission behind the scenes. 'Twere a mercy if there were no admission to the house."

"'Tis true the times are evil," admitted his friend, "but this play-acting amuses both the company and the audience, even if for different reasons, and for that matter, Peter, why not be as merry as we can while it

lasts. His Majesty holds the stage in New York and Philadelphia, and Mr. Washington and his company are barn-storming it on the road, and trying to get an engagement at the regular houses, is it not so?"

"Ah, neat, very," murmured his nearest companion, out of a cloud of smoke, while Peter nodded with the nearest approach to cheerfulness he had shown that evening.

"I hear that the ghost hasn't walked for the rebel players all winter," pursued Watson, pleased with his own wit. "'Tis like enough each man-jack of them is writing a tragedy. Here comes one of our finest stars now, but though it's said he prefers the rôle of Romeo on the stage and off of it, he seems to my eye more like the melancholy Dane to-night than the ardent lover in doublet and hose. Good-evening, Colonel Rutherford, I hope I see you well, sir."

Rutherford looked at him with undisguised contempt. His brow was dark with some hidden passion and his eye was filled with a light that told of smouldering fires below, but he was a handsome and soldierly man, and as he stood in the full blaze of the sparkling logs, his cloak thrown back and his figure erect, he looked an ideal cavalier, and truth to tell, he had indeed essayed both Romeo and Hamlet without discredit. His glance traveled quickly now from the speaker to Peter and back again, and he answered

with cold civility: "I am well, sir, and apparently others are not less so." As he finished his eye sought Peter's with a strange, fleeting look that conveyed some unknown and unwelcome meaning.

"Surely," replied Watson, impervious to any application that might be made to himself. "Will you not join us?"

"No, thank you. I have been looking for Mr. Simpson, as I have some news for him, and, begging your pardon, I must ask a word in private with him."

Peter started up, filled with vague apprehensions.

"Come over here," said Rutherford. "I see a small vacant table for two where we can speak quietly together." He led the way to a corner of the room and they sat down. "I've just seen Von Steinwehr," said Rutherford, abruptly. "He saw the Captain of the *Jersey* this afternoon, and heard all about that attempted escape the other night. Dalrymple is the only one living of the party. The guards who took the boat out were ordered to let no one get away, and they thought the fellow was dead when they carried him on board the ship, but by morning he had revived. He has as many lives as a cat." He made a gesture of disgust.

Peter did not reply at once. He looked at Rutherford without speaking, his face pallid and his eyes fixed. He was breathing deeply, his mind con-

centrated on one point alone. This man, whom he hated so deeply, lived. He had thought him dead, but he breathed, inhabited the same globe—he was alive! Alive, and he had thought him dead! The intensity of his thought, the inner desire of his heart, stamped itself on the silence that fell between them, leaped from one mind to the other, and burned deeply in each brain. The two men looked fixedly into each other's eyes, and knew that they desired the death of this man with all the ferocity of which human passions are capable. Each felt murder, and had Robert Dalrymple fallen into the power of either at that moment his life would not have been worth more than a pinch of snuff. The veneering which civilization has spread over primitive instincts presently reasserted itself.

"Alive, you say?" said Peter.

"Alive, and, I judge, likely to recover from some wounds he got someway, hit himself in the water against a fish's fin, or something of that sort." He laughed unsteadily, and added: "I was sure you'd be glad to hear the good news, as you would naturally want to be the first to carry it to Miss Windham and relieve her cruel uncertainty. I trust that she is somewhat recovered from the shock of the first information. It's a pity we didn't know the truth then."

"It's a pity it wasn't the truth," said Peter, in a fierce undertone. He brought his hand down heavily on the table, while a savage spark leaped out of Rutherford's eyes. "Yes, a pity for him and for all of them. To hell with the whole devil's brood of them!"

It was no new thing for Peter Simpson to use strong language, but seldom did his fury reach such a height as at that moment. Rutherford, even in his own secretly brutal mood, felt a pang of admiration at the transformation caused by this wave of overpowering rage.

"Oh, they'll get there all right," he said, cynically, "but some of them are a long time en route."

"Tell me," said Peter, "how did it happen?"

Rutherford gave him an account of the attempted escape and its result, and added: "So for the present, and for a long time, there will be no more escaping parties. And as for being dead, why, let a man stay long enough on the *Jersey* and no dead man would swap chances with him. Time, time, Peter."

"Ay, time," replied Peter, shaking his head, "but damme if I'd take long odds on a man who can pull out of a close call like that. And to think that he should be the only one out of ten, too."

Rutherford assented gloomily.

"And look at me," continued Peter. "Look at the

fix I'm in, feeling the way I do and compelled to go home and tell Elizabeth and have her weep for joy in my arms! And then I'll have everything to go through with again from the first, just as if it had never been brought up before, and I'll use every argument I ever used, and urge and command and plead and threaten, and at the end of it all she will pray God to spare him, and beg me not to hate him, and implore me to let her have her way in this one thing, and beseech me to let her marry the man she loves, the only man she ever can love! Zounds, Rutherford, this rebel insurrection will drive me daft yet."

Rutherford's expression contracted. A vein showed prominently in his forehead between the eyes, but he spoke with forced composure. "The game is not played out yet, Peter. He is still on the *Jersey*, and 'twill be many a day before any man leaves her now."

"There might be exchanges," suggested Peter.

"Yes, there might be, but it isn't likely—for some." He made a significant pause, and added: "You understand, there might be ways of—well, of influencing that matter. I think possibly I might get at it some way."

"I hope you can. We must make the best of things as they are now. What I hate most of all is going home and breaking the news to Elizabeth."

"It's a duty I don't envy you. Ah, Staats, how are you?"

The newcomer, Col. Staats Von Steinwehr, was one of the young Hessian noblemen, who, as officers in the British army, found the rebellion in King George's colonies an exciting adventure. He replied cordially to Rutherford's salute, and gave a more formal greeting to Peter, with whom he had a passing acquaintance, and accepted his invitation to sit down.

The conversation became more general for a while, and touched upon affairs in the city, and then Von Steinwehr turned to Peter and said: "I was disappointed in not seeing Miss Windham at the Walton ball last evening. Miss Lewis and myself led the cotillion, and I was sorry to hear that your niece is somewhat indisposed."

"Yes; a cold—this sudden change in the weather."

"Beastly," assented Von Steinwehr. "Been vile ever since that storm of the other evening. It lashed the shipping about in the bay considerably." He looked hard at Peter. In the silence that followed the thoughts of all three again fastened on the subject of the attempted escape, which had been of sufficient moment to attract some attention, and had been the cause of a brief paragraph in Rivington's *Royal Gazette*, the organ of the Tories, which appeared that day.

"Quite a little flurry over in the East River, too," pursued Von Steinwehr, carelessly. "Foolish lot of men on the *Jersey* got dissatisfied with their quarters and tried to get away. They got away all right, but not in the way they intended. I understand there's only one out of ten to tell the tale, if he's alive yet."

"What do you mean?" asked Peter, catching at a straw.

"Why, this man, Dalrymple, I think his name is, got pretty badly hurt somehow, nobody knows how, and they don't think he'll live."

"A rash proceeding," said Peter, indifferently. "It's been tried before without success. The tale of the survivor ought to be of considerable interest to his companions. I'll make my adieus to you younger men and go home. This east wind twinges my gout."

The two officers stood up to take their leave and thanked Peter for his pressing invitation to call within a few days, when he was quite certain Miss Windham's indisposition would have passed.

As his sturdy figure went down the brilliantly-lighted room towards the door, Von Steinwehr said: "I suspect our friend of more cordiality towards you than myself, but I give you fair warning I intend to be a rival for the prize."

Rutherford made an abrupt dissenting gesture.

"You might as well be a rival to a man of straw. The prize you mean is neither for you nor me."

Peter had almost reached the door when he met a man who had just entered, and the unexpected sight of him changed the current of his thoughts to a practical consideration at once.

"Ah, Wilson," he said, heartily, "I'm glad to see you. What about that note?"

Wilson shook his head.

"I'm sorry, Peter, but you've lost your thousand dollar loan. If you had had the note endorsed by De Lancey, as I suggested, you would have been all right. But that fellow Collins has turned traitor, probably to save his property within the American lines not far from Valley Forge, and he has not only taken the oath of allegiance to the rebels himself, but his eldest son was commissioned a lieutenant in the so-called army yesterday. I've tried my best to collect that note, but it's no use."

"Well, I'm damned," said Peter.

"Oh, cheer up. It's all for the King's cause, and you're only out of it temporarily. As soon as the war is over you know we'll have everything, and then——"

He was left without an auditor. Peter swung quickly on his heel and out into the street. And there, under the light of the stars, with his favorite

little black servant swinging a lantern before him on the dark, uneven pavement, Peter Simpson strode along towards his house, the maddest and most thoroughly disgruntled Tory in all New York.

He was admitted by Joe, and Mrs. Hardy's anxious face showed in the hall. "I'm glad you've come," she said. "Elizabeth has been asking for you."

And Peter, outwardly tame over his inward fury, went up the stairway and tapped gently at the half open door.

CHAPTER XVII

An Ungrateful Girl

THE Royalists were not as sanguine in the spring of '78 as they had been previously. Burgoyne's surrender to Gates in the autumn of the preceding year had been a severe shock, both in England and America. Burgoyne's flattering remark to General Schuyler: "Your fund of men is inexhaustible; like the Hydra's head, when cut off seven more spring up in its stead," found an uneasy echo in the minds of many. The surrender of the English general at Saratoga justly marks one of the fifteen decisive battles of the world. Up to that time Americans had been called "rebels," not only by England, but by all the great powers of the earth, but after it they rose to a more dignified level, and were respectfully spoken of in most foreign councils as patriots attempting to rescue their country from unjust oppression.

Most significant of all, was the French Alliance. Franklin in Paris had drawn up the forty-four articles of the two treaties, while André and other British officers were installed in his house in Philadelphia,

making sportive experiments with his electrical apparatus and playing on his beloved harps and harpsichords. The opposition in Parliament every day grew more powerful; Lord Chatham had denounced the use of the American Indians as allies in warfare in one of the most brilliant and bitter of all his orations. Lord North had resigned, and with the death of Chatham, in April, the two great friends of the American cause were removed from action.

In New York and Philadelphia the Tory dissatisfaction was rampant. There were no soft allusions to the rebels as patriots in those cities, where the citizens of the King's revolting provinces were in the tight grip of military rule. Mrs. Fitzmorris spent the month of April at Peter's, and found much reason for complaint with the way things were drifting. In the middle of the month, when the news came that the Congress had resolved that no conference could be held with the commissioners from Great Britain until that power had withdrawn its fleets and armies, and acknowledged the independence of the United States, her indignation knew no bounds.

"As utterly brazen as if their upstart republic had all Europe at its back. And the effect of this pernicious sentiment is beginning to permeate all classes and conditions. The very servants feel it, and enlist without saying so much as by your leave. One of my

youngest negro wenches was out until after midnight not long since, and when I reproved her the next day she said that it was a free country and that she had a right to do as she pleased. I discharged her, and she flaunted out of the room, boasting that her lover was secretly committed to the rebels, and had conveyed information to Mr. Washington through the hostler of one of his secretaries. At this rate we are likely not to have any servants left."

Peter did not reply at once. His face was overcast and he was deep in meditation. Mrs. Fitzmorris, being thoroughly launched on a favorite topic, continued to hold forth in a highly injured strain on further grievances connected with the servant question and the evils of living on the same soil with rebels, upstarts, rapscallions and general riff-raff and bob-tail elements. Peter, being well seasoned to this sort of thing, was totally unheeding, nor did he know when she passed from a denunciation of the hoi-polloi to an elaboration of her theory regarding a well-organized state of society. Familiarity with both themes had long since deadened the auditory nerve to further impressions, and the busy clack of her tongue merely hammered away dimly at the outer portals of his consciousness. Having reached a certain point in his cogitations, he took advantage of the first lull.

"Eliza," he said, removing his pipe, and looking

critically at Mrs. Fitzmorris, "this insurrection is indeed serious. It is going to the root of everything, and the worst of it is that it is not merely confined to an element we would naturally expect to take up with such ideas, but it has reached into the most conservative circles and has affected even our women." He paused a moment. "The truth is that even young girls are disposed to carry this new doctrine into their conduct. I can trace Elizabeth's first resistance to me to this very thing. I have not given up hope of bringing her back to her former ways by force of argument and gentle coercion, but I confess I am nonplussed. In spite of the fact that young Dalrymple has been a prisoner for nearly two years, she will not give him up, will not accept Rutherford. I should like for her to marry him in June. Do you think we can bring it about?"

Mrs. Fitzmorris gave him a sarcastic smile. "Not if she is left to you. The girl should have been compelled to obey long ago. Make her marry him, Peter."

"'Tis easier said than done. And, mark you, Eliza, I'll do all that a man can decently do to compel a woman, but I won't force her past a certain point. When Betsey knew she was dying and talked with me about the future of her child, she begged me to let her marry as she pleased. I promised her, and

I'll keep my word. But I'm at my wits' ends lately, and before you go I want you to have a good talk with her and see what you can do. Rutherford has devoted himself to her all winter, but he has made no headway."

Elizabeth parried a number of attempts on the part of her great-aunt during the next few days, but the end was inevitable. Mrs. Fitzmorris was not to be balked, and she was spurred with a determination to win the girl if possible in order to take an honor over Peter, for it was her favorite assertion to him that if she had had the training of Elizabeth she would marry as she was told. She had asked Elizabeth into her room while she was having her hair dressed, and then, her toilet complete, she had dismissed the maid and after a little preliminary skirmishing had introduced the topic near to the atrophied organ she believed to be her heart.

In the beginning Elizabeth was very quiet and would say but little, whereupon her aunt, pressing her further, began to inquire the reasons for what she termed strange and unladylike conduct. "You know," she continued, "that for many years we, your Cousin Amanda, your Uncle Peter and myself, have looked forward to making an excellent marriage, one fit for you in every way, and now a brilliant match is offered and we would like to see you settled this

spring. Why not marry Colonel Rutherford in June?"

"I cannot marry Colonel Rutherford in June, or any other time."

"Cannot? What do you mean by cannot?"

"Because I do not care enough for him. I do not care for him at all."

"Nonsense, Elizabeth! That is no obstacle. Marry him first and learn to care for him afterwards. He's the sort of man to win a woman."

"He cannot win me, aunt."

"And why not, pray?"

"Because I don't love him. I love another man."

"Love!" cried Mrs. Fitzmorris. "Love! A girl's foolishness!"

"And," said Elizabeth, calmly, "I know that I shall never love anybody else."

"You talk too much of love," said Mrs. Fitzmorris, angrily. "It is not delicate for a girl of your age to say so much of such a sentiment. It is improper. When I was young I never dreamed of making such remarks, and I cannot imagine where you got the ideas which have made you so forward. Amanda and myself have trained you, and your uncle has instructed you, yet instead of doing credit to us you say these positively shocking things. For my part, unless you

pay more attention to our wishes, I shall have nothing more to do with you."

Elizabeth dimpled into a provoking smile. Too often had her aunt threatened to have no more to do with her for the words to carry any weight. She looked mischievously at the irate dame.

"Auntie, don't you think there must be an awfully weak point somewhere, if the training of three grown people can't bring up one poor little girl right? I know I must be very wicked, but you see I've just made up my mind to be happy in my own way, and if I'm not a credit to you and Cousin Amanda and Uncle Peter I'm sorry, but I can't help it."

"You are like a baby," said her aunt, irritated beyond endurance. "I wonder that Peter permits you so much freedom. If you were my ward you should know the difference."

"I'm sure of it, auntie, but you know you'd have just that much more trouble for nothing. You see Uncle Peter really loves me."

The tips of Mrs. Fitzmorris' fingers tingled. She was a woman quite capable of boxing ears if she dared. Her long, straight figure, which still looked aristocratic in trailing lengths of soft satin, was drawn to a feline tension that betrayed itself in every line as she concentrated her look.

"You are insolent to speak so, and you may find

yourself mistaken some day. You think you are to be Peter's heiress, but if you try him too far and presume to set yourself up to marry against his will you will discover that he is not the man to waste his money on an ungrateful girl."

At last she had gone too far herself. Elizabeth's warm, impetuous and guileless nature rose hotly. Her eyes, grown large and lambent, were fixed on the unyielding face before her, and in her cheeks there flamed the banners of outraged modesty.

"How can you say that?" she cried. "You know it is not so. I have never told a lie, and never pretended to like any one whom I did not in my life, and Uncle Peter knows it. I do not care for him less because I wish to marry a man whom he does not like, and he knows I do not care for his money. He may leave it to any one else, but no matter what I do he will never believe me ungrateful."

The candid words penetrated Mrs. Fitzmorris' mood. She did not care to be indiscreet, even with Elizabeth. Also she knew Peter, and she realized that in any conceivable crisis in which he would have to choose between them, his selection would not fall on her.

"You may say you do not care for money, but you do not know that. Because you have always had everything that money could buy to make you happy,

beautiful gowns and all that a girl could desire, you cannot realize that to do without these things would be misery. You have most of your life to live yet, and it alarms me to see you do not comprehend that a woman cannot keep her place in the world without clothes, a house, servants, a carriage, jewels, all the things she needs for her social standing and her own comfort. Can you imagine yourself without a maid? What would become of you if you actually had to do things for yourself? Your life would be ruined. I have seen such things happen. When my friend Mrs. Wilkinson lost her fortune she talked at first just as you do now, but poverty crushed her spirit, and she died within a year of a broken heart."

"A broken heart!" echoed the girl, scornfully. "I wouldn't respect myself if I thought I had that kind of a heart. It's of no use for you to tell me these things, Aunt Eliza. We will never think the same about such matters. You believe that money can buy everything to make one happy, and I don't. And you believe too that because I am young and inexperienced that it is not possible for me to know what kind of a woman I really am, but I know that too, for I am not a child now. I laugh and sing and dance and go to parties, but I think a great deal too, and that makes a difference. You see I really know more than I used to. Two men have been in love with me for almost

two years, and I have sense enough to know that I am not in love with both of them."

Mrs. Fitzmorris uttered a muffled shriek. "You are lost to all sense of decency," she cried.

"I don't see how I could be. Mrs. Dalrymple said she was an old friend of yours, and Uncle Peter himself brought Colonel Rutherford here and introduced him. Mrs. Dalrymple told Nellie Musgrove's mother that when you were in school with her you tried to run off with a young fellow, and the rope broke when you started, and you had to come back. I wouldn't have that happen to me for anything. It seems to me that I've been quite proper."

Mrs. Fitzmorris felt benumbed. This, after all the years—oh, what a cat Sarah Folliott was! She steadied herself through the gray haze that spread around her.

"You are no judge of anything. Mrs. Dalrymple comes of a good family, but she was one of the wildest girls in school. I have never told you what I know about her. I do not know what worse I could hear than that you are infatuated with her son. It is simply rank and impossible folly."

"Aunt Eliza," said Elizabeth, gravely, "were you ever really in love? I know, of course, that you married Uncle Theodore, but he was a very wealthy man, and if you thought the same when you were a girl

that you do now you must have married him for his money and loved somebody else."

Eliza Fitzmorris turned ashen. Her breath stopped in her throat. It had been so long since those happy foolish days—so long since the moonlight nights, the walks, the innocent kisses, light and inconsequent meeting of the lips, and then a boy whistling down the street and a blushing girl kneeling at her prayers. Had not those memories been dead for many years! Yet, now——!

"And if you did," pursued Elizabeth, "you must have been very unhappy, so unhappy that you could not understand how another woman would feel if she didn't do the same."

"I married the man I respected and cared for," said Mrs. Fitzmorris, "and we were as congenial as husband and wife for many years as most married people are. We lived much more happily than any eloping couple I ever knew or heard of, and more so, than a number of instances where there was supposed to be this wild, romantic love on both sides that you talk about. In a number of those cases the parties concerned found out too late that they had only been rash, mistaking mere passion for respect and solid attachment. And I warn you, Elizabeth, that poverty played its part too. I tell you it is a mistake for a girl to marry a poor man."

"Robert is not a poor man, as you mean it," replied Elizabeth. "As for all those sentiments you mention, as being necessary, I have them all for him. Do you think I do not respect and admire a man who already had his reputation as a soldier, and who since has endured imprisonment for two years rather than purchase his liberty by going over to the other side? If he were to do so, you and Uncle Peter might receive him here in this parlor, but I would not. I am trying to make you understand, Aunt Eliza, that I really know what I am about, and if you think it is indelicate for me to say right out that I love a man, you ought to know that I wouldn't if I were left alone in peace. But you keep telling me to marry for money, and I'm not the kind of girl to sell myself."

"You will no doubt find out your mistake when it is too late. You have always been wayward and headstrong, and it would really be to your best interest if you were not consulted or reasoned with at all, but simply told to prepare yourself to marry the husband of our choosing for you on a certain date. I believe in the proper exercise of authority to get nonsensical notions out of the head of a foolish girl. None of us will ever hear to your marrying this man who has captured your fancy, and you will find plenty of obstacles in the path of your folly if you persist."

"I have already found obstacles, Aunt Eliza, and some of the most serious were not even of your own making. But there is one obstacle that will always stand in the way of making me marry a man whom I do not wish to, and that is myself! You want me to marry Colonel Rutherford, but if I could be forced to stand before the altar with him I would not utter the necessary promises, and no minister would perform the ceremony. You see, auntie, even 'the proper exercise of authority' comes to a stop some time."

Farther apart than ever were the poles, the two looked into each other's eyes, one elderly, authoritative, stern; the other young, apparently pliable, but cheerfully stubborn, "as sweet as a rosebud but as contrary as a mule," Peter had declared to her aunt. Mrs. Fitzmorris' horror was as genuine as any emotion she ever felt. She was a woman who all her life had succeeded in surrounding herself with artificial conditions, and she had lived by false standards and nurtured hothouse emotions until her ethics were on a level with those of a galvanized puppet. Having no resources with which to meet a crude and unblemished morality, she instinctively sought refuge.

"I do not know why you should make us so much trouble," she said. "After all that we have done for you it is hard to find you so ungrateful. And you not only speak with disrespect, but actually as if you

had no affection for me. I have helped to bring you up from babyhood, only to discover that you have a heart of stone."

"Auntie, I love you and Cousin Amanda and Uncle Peter, and I believe you all love me, but I'm a woman now, and if I could only have my personal freedom and not be told how I must feel and what I must think, we wouldn't have any trouble. I don't intend to be ungrateful, I don't feel that way, but I'm not a child any more—I have suffered too much in the past two years. Just don't worry me so much, will you auntie, dear, and see if I don't come out all right yet without disgracing you or myself."

She smiled at her difficult relative, but her eyes were misty and the corners of her mouth quivered a little. Mrs. Fitzmorris failed to note that the key-note of affection was missing.

"My dear," she said, "it is because I am so fond of you that I am anxious for your future. You are so different from all the young girls I know that it is difficult to plan for you." A recollection that the undesired suitor was safely out of the way went through her mind, and she added: "But for the present there may be no especial danger for you, and I hope that in time you will be sensible enough to take advantage of the brilliant opportunities offered you and forget these foolish ideas."

Elizabeth looked down at her embroidery and said nothing, and the passage at arms ended in an armed truce, with the position of each more clearly defined than ever. But Mrs. Fitzmorris was forced to one new idea—Elizabeth really was a grown woman.

After that her stay in New York was brief. Returning to Philadelphia, the girl had a short respite from the most harassing of the influences that beset her situation, for Peter, since the night he had told her that Robert was still alive, had also had an illumination on the subject of his niece's matured character, and it had given him pause and food for much reflection.

Mrs. Hardy's non-committal interest seemed to fade into indifference, and in the perfect spring weather, with fresh and vigorous currents of hope coursing through her, Elizabeth was bathed in the melancholy happiness of those who love without visible reward.

CHAPTER XVIII

Not Your Wife, But Mine!

THE defeat of Burgoyne in the autumn of '77 had been the turning-point of the Revolution. European favor now swung towards American arms, and spring of the following year saw the alliance between France and the struggling young country.

Still, matters looked dark enough. The British were in control of New York, Long Island, Staten Island and Philadelphia. The Congress had fled across the Susquehanna, and the patriot army suffered severely from the cold of a bitter season and the lack of the necessaries of life during the winter of 1777–78.

Elizabeth virtually had no rest from the importunity of Rutherford all this time, though as month after month passed, and he could wring from her no promise or assurance of any kind, he resorted to more subtle methods than open love-making, and his attentions not only became almost reverential, but, in marked deference to her intense and increasing devotion to the patriot cause, he assumed in her presence a respectful and half conciliatory tone towards the "rebels."

"Bess," said Peter, as they sat at breakfast one morning, "make yourself ready with some finery and prepare to go to Philadelphia with me. Sir Henry Clinton is to succeed General Howe as commander-in-chief of the army, and Sir William and his brother are to have a great fête and ball given in their honor before they sail. Major André has planned it, and Colonel Rutherford is to be one of the squires in the tournament, and he wishes you to be his lady. I've told him that you would accept."

"I know what you told him, uncle. I saw him yesterday afternoon. But I shall take no part in it. For one thing it would be little less than treason to join in such honors to Lord Howe when ——"

"Treason! Treason! Egad, Bess, have you lost your head! The only treason is forgetting the allegiance due to His Majesty. How often must I tell you, girl, that the King owns these colonies! You will go to Philadelphia with me, and let me hear no more of such petticoated nonsense. Lord Howe is my friend, and we will go to bid him farewell with the respect due him."

Elizabeth was pallid to an unnatural hue as Peter finished, but her blue-gray eyes were fixed steadily on him as she replied: "Uncle Peter, I will go with you to Philadelphia and I will attend the ball—that much I will do to please you. But that is all. I decline

to take part in the tournament, and I told Colonel Rutherford yesterday that I would not be his lady in the fête. That is asking too much, and you know it." Her voice shook a little with the last words. Peter knew the blood of his own family when it spoke, and moreover he secretly believed that time and fate would remove Robert and press Elizabeth into the alliance on which his heart was set. He spoke gently and courteously.

"My dear child, I shall not urge you to do anything unpleasant. This is—ah—not political, you know. It's—er—social, purely social, and as both Sir William and the Admiral have shown us so many favors and done so much to make it pleasant for us in this d——, this disagreeable state of affairs, it's a duty we owe to them to lend our presence. And others would miss you, too, André and Rutherford. Yes, you needn't shake your head. You need some recreation. There's no reason why you should shut yourself up as you've been doing of late. Get yourself a handsome frock, Bess, and be the queen of the fête." He rose from the table, and kissing her on the forehead, he added: "I'm trying that new pair of bays this morning. Be ready by the fifteenth, Bess." He swung himself confidently out of the room, and did not see two great tears that fell into Elizabeth's plate.

It was now May, and excitement was rife in both

New York and Philadelphia over the approaching Mischianza. Both cities had been the scene of much dissipation among the officers, especially Philadelphia, where Howe had his headquarters and where he himself had set the pace in drinking, gaming, and other diversions even more discreditable. André and Rutherford both busied themselves in preparations for the great Mischianza, and Elizabeth saw little of them before she and her uncle arrived in Philadelphia on the evening before the fête, having made the two-days' journey there in a coach drawn by four bays, and followed by a chaise containing two men servants and a maid.

They drove at once to the house of Elizabeth's great-aunt, and were welcomed by that worthy dame in her most gracious manner. In the evening Peter went to pay his respects to Sir William and the Admiral, and André and Rutherford called on Elizabeth.

"And will the tournament really be so brilliant?" asked Elizabeth, eagerly, after listening to André's description of the costumes.

"Not so brilliant as it might have been," replied André, "since you declined to be one of the ladies for the pageant, and you have cost us a knight too." He waved his hand towards Rutherford, "for he would not take part without you."

"I have gained what the tournament has lost," said

Rutherford, bowing deeply. "I shall now have the pleasure of devoting myself to Miss Windham all the evening."

"You sly dog!" cried André, slapping him on the back. "Miss Windham, I shall have to tilt my lance for my lady-love to-morrow evening, but believe me, my heart will turn to you. My fealty is yours, sweet maiden, until all the stars of heaven have fallen from their courses, until——"

"Hold!" cried Rutherford. "I'll run you through if you don't shut up. He is a fickle deceiver," he said to Elizabeth. "His vows are not worth the breath that utters them. Mademoiselle, until to-morrow night I bid you adieu." He kissed her hand. In her room Elizabeth washed the spot his lips had touched, and the name she murmured passionately was not Rutherford's.

At midnight on the following night the great fête reached its height. The regatta had embarked at the upper end of the city, and the various galleys bore Sir William and Lord Howe, Sir Henry Clinton, General Knyphausen and other British and Hessian officers, their suites and many ladies, the women representing not only the Tory families, but Whigs also, for the darts of Cupid had flown thick and fast that past winter, and many of the would-be conquerors had been conquered so effectually that when later Wash-

ington chased Sir Henry across New Jersey no fewer than some six hundred officers and men returned to their fair ladies, and their descendants to-day are among the most loyal citizens of the United States.

Rutherford, in full uniform, devoted himself unreservedly to Elizabeth, who was seated on Lord Howe's galley with the beautiful Peggy Shippen, afterwards to be the wife of Benedict Arnold, and accompanied by Sir John Wrottesley, Colonel O'Hara, who at a later date conveyed Cornwallis' sword to Washington, the vivacious Miss Chew, a daughter of the Chief-Justice, and a large company of titled and distinguished guests.

Peggy was radiant in a gorgeous costume which has become historic. Lord Cathcart, the chief of the knights, was attended by two black slaves, in tunics and drawers of blue and white silk, silver chains hanging over their bare breasts and on their arms broad silver clasps. The tourney was like one of old, and a company of knights, richly attired, rode into the arena and, at the challenge of the Herald of the Knights of the Blended Rose, the champions of the Ladies of the Burning Mountain engaged their adversaries in combat with lances, pistols and swords, ending with a furious hand-to-hand fight between the two chiefs, until the Marshal of the Field rushed in and ended the tourney by declaring that the ladies of the rival

knights were satisfied with the prowess of their lovers and bade them desist.

When the ball opened in the great apartment that was like a vision of fairy-land in its pale blue and gold, Elizabeth, who had in reality been under a nervous tension all the evening, at last regained a natural flow of spirits. The haunting sense that Robert, in some mysterious way, was near had not for a moment deserted her, and the quick, darting glances she had involuntarily shot around had not escaped Rutherford's attention. As they stood together in the moment before the first minuet Rutherford, inflamed to an excess of ardor which had not been lessened by potations of wine, could not resist the sudden temptation that assailed him.

"I do not think he will come," he whispered to her. For an instant she did not seem to understand, then her eyes flashed a reply before she spoke.

"Do not be so sure. Perhaps your information is no better than mine."

"Not so good, no doubt. You Whig ladies have mysterious means of communication unknown to us. Still, I am willing to lay a wager. What say you?"

"Done, sir."

"A kiss against a kiss. No! Surely you will not hesitate!"

"Never! Though it is scarcely fair for me to accept a wager which you have already lost."

Rutherford laughed.

"I never take a prophecy seriously. But I promise you if my rival appears I'll simply carry you off in the good old way that was so successful before later and more tedious methods. How will that suit you, Mademoiselle?"

"Perfectly—if you *only* will I shall be delighted." The coquettish laughter of her eyes above her fan was the last thrill that went through him before they swung out into the figure.

At ten o'clock the company had flocked to the windows and the balconies to witness the elaborate fireworks planned by Captain Montressor, the Chief Engineer, and when at last the figure of Fame burst from a fountain and blew from her trumpet: "Les lauriers sont immortels," loud cheers echoed. Elizabeth was silent. The pageantry and excitement of the fête had temporarily beguiled her, but now a sore pang shot through her.

"You do not applaud," said Rutherford. "Will you not add your laurels to our heroes?"

"Your heroes are not *my* heroes, Colonel Rutherford," said Elizabeth, "and the Immortals I honor do not wear a scarlet coat and gold lace. They are not here." She paused, stopped by the swelling in her throat.

Rutherford, angered and chagrined, forced a laugh. "Happy Immortals!" he said. "Henceforth I shall live only in hempen tow. But though I am only an ignoble mortal I dare to worship you. Surely I may not be denied the right of homage?"

The reply that rose to Elizabeth's lips was not reassuring, but ere she could utter it the folding-doors leading into a saloon over two hundred feet in length were thrown open and supper was announced.

Towards the end of the banquet the Herald of the Blended Rose, in his habit of ceremony and attended by his esquires and trumpeters, entered and proclaimed as toasts the health of the King and Queen, the royal family, the army and navy and their distinguished commanders, the knights and their ladies, and the ladies in general. The banqueters arose and to the musical flourish of the trumpets lifted their wine glasses aloft, and under the excitement of the hour fair Whig maidens forgot their patriotism under the ardent eyes of their lovers and drank to His Majesty!

When the last toast, "The ladies, God bless them all," was sounded, Rutherford turning to Elizabeth said: "Though you left your glass untasted to the King, I drink to you alone. There is no woman in the world but you." He drained his glass and offered his arm, for the company was leaving the tables to return to the ballroom. In the re-forming of the

groups, there stood near Sir William and Lord Howe, André, Elizabeth, Rutherford, Peggy Shippen and her knight, Peter, gorgeous in full court dress, Sir John Wrottesley, Colonel O'Hara, and various ladies of the Blended Rose and the Burning Mountain, all in elegant and picturesque attire and forming the most brilliant party of the fête.

General Howe had been a devoted admirer of Elizabeth ever since he met her, and as she approached on Rutherford's arm he bent his eyes on her with unconcealed fervor. Well might he do so, for her beauty was exquisitely displayed in a Venetian costume of the fourteenth century in gold and white brocaded satin, the sheen of the silken stuff as yellow as sunshine on wheat-fields when they whisper in a summer breeze, and gathering in its sumptuous folds the glow of the light in the room until she seemed to concentrate the myriad points of flame in a nimbus that encircled her like a shower of topaz.

His Lordship bowed deferentially to her. "Lady," he said, "I have sworn equal homage to the Ladies of the Blended Rose and of the Burning Mountain, but they have all been captured by their respective knights, and I proclaim you the Queen of the fête and of my heart." He would have bent his knee, after the manner of the knights, but Rutherford, somewhat inflamed with wine and stung with jealousy by

Howe's outspoken avowal, lost his head in a temporary madness which had been slowly rising all the evening. He made a dissenting gesture.

"My Lord," he said, saluting, "I must challenge your right to the Queen. Your Lordship has the honor to do homage to my future wife."

In the stupefied instant that held all who heard silent, there was a commotion near the doorway; the gay and gallant company fell apart and made way for an uninvited guest, a tall but emaciated man, with a blonde head and broad shoulders, his hollow blue eyes blazing with an intense fire, his worn body dressed not in silks and satins, but in a soiled and battered pair of hempen breeches and a faded blue shirt. His face had the prison pallor, and was carved in lines of suffering, and his left arm hung across his chest in a sling, while on the right temple the deep scar of a sabre stroke ran to the roots of his hair. Even as Rutherford uttered his ill-timed boast, the unreckoned guest strode towards him and heard the words. Scarcely had he finished when Robert Dalrymple flung himself between Rutherford and the General, and taking Elizabeth's hand from the Colonel's he grasped it in his own and turning to Rutherford he cried in clear, thrilling tones: "Not *your* wife, but mine!"

CHAPTER XIX

On The Field

EVERY eye was fixed on Robert, as though he were one risen from the dead. Tallmadge, who followed him closely in fatigue uniform, said afterwards that the entire company stood motionless as if in a trance. Both men were covered with the stain of travel, for they had made hard riding against time from New York as soon as Robert was exchanged, and they had been in the saddle almost without food or sleep for over thirty-six hours.

It was a terrible moment for Rutherford. The sudden appearance of a man whom he fondly believed to be as good as dead, his challenge, the sight of him holding Elizabeth's hand while his own was yet warm with the contact, shocked him into an incredulous amazement. He stared dumbly.

Peter's bland and benignant smile stiffened into a ghastly expression. The blood drained slowly out of the well-filled veins of his ruddy face, and left him chalky. The brief instant of silence was as devoid of sound as if Time had stopped the wheels of the world. The eyes of Robert and Rutherford clinched in a gaze

that meant more than combat on the field, the full-fledged inner man of each leaping towards the other in furious desire for the same woman, but under the hot rage of the temporary mood lay the cold certainty of defeat for one and the thrill of triumph for the other.

As the clear blast of a silver trumpet from the ball-room heralded the dance, the spell was broken. Peggy Shippen shrieked, and fainted in the arms of her knight, and other women betrayed symptoms of following so opportune an example.

"Dalrymple!" exclaimed Sir William, who, although he saw Robert for the first time, was fully apprised of Rutherford's secret efforts against his exchange. Elizabeth lifted her head from Robert's shoulder, where it had fallen for a moment in a swoon of joy, and all the spirit of her finely tempered blood rushed to her lips and sparkled in her eyes as she held herself proudly erect and said: "Yes, my Lord, and he has said truly. Your Lordship, permit me to decline the offer you have made me." Still holding Robert's hand she swayed to the floor in a low curtsey; in her flowing, yellow draperies her fair beauty was set like a lily in a cup of gold. The General turned color.

"Pardon, mademoiselle, I abdicate, but if your taste were better I might regret the loss more." He turned

to Robert. "You have scarcely come hither with a wedding garment on," he said, mockingly, "and since you have entered the lists unannounced and won so fair a prize, I take it for granted that the fête is over for you." His significant glance of dismissal included both Robert and Tallmadge.

"My Lord," replied Robert, with stern self-possession, "it is true I am not clad as a bridegroom, or as becomes so brave an assembly, but 'tis well that I am clothed at all, for my last garments were devoured by the vermin on board His Majesty's ship, the *Jersey*, and had I brought my companions with me they might be even more unwelcome guests than myself. As for Miss Windham's taste, I leave it to better judges than the man who questions it. I entered the lists long ago,"—he looked straight at Rutherford—"and, though I may be unworthy, the knight who is chosen by the lady wins. My Lord, I have the honor to bid you adieu. Come, Elizabeth."

The Admiral had been silent; now he spoke contemptuously: "Begone, jackanapes! You are more fit for the bone-yard than for the ballroom, but, even so, we are not done with you, and such as you yet."

"True, my Lord!" cried Robert, flaming into a white heat, "and we are not done with you yet! Thanks to you I am scarce more than bones, and 'tis God's mercy that they are not whitening with others

on the beach in full view of His Majesty's prison ships. But with what muscle and sinew are left me I shall serve His Excellency, General Washington, against you, and if my bones may yet be ground into powder, and bullets be cast from the iron in my blood, so much the better. Right you are, your Lordship! You are not done with us, and, living or dead, we are not done with you."

He thundered out the last words with the defiance of a battle charge on the field. Intense passion transformed his attenuated figure into a threatening giant with power to slay. By his side Elizabeth, pale, but radiant with courage, regarded the Admiral with scarcely less of heroism than Robert. Tallmadge had silently approached and stood on the other side of Elizabeth, and the three were lined thus against the Commander-in-Chief of the British army and the Admiral of the navy, as if the spirit of independence personified rose up to defy His Majesty. The Admiral turned to his brother.

"Let us go into the ballroom," he said. "We must not neglect those who are here to do us honor."

Rutherford was savage with the sting of his defeat. He stepped forward and confronted Robert. "His Lordship is right," he said. "We have dallied with a tiresome interruption too long. Unless you are dealing in mock heroics, I shall be happy to encounter you

on the field, not in an affaire d' honneur, where only gentlemen may meet, but in the open fight where we crush our low-born enemies, provided they do not run first." His eyes sought Elizabeth's half tauntingly. "Mademoiselle, I part with you in deep regret at thought of your fate. Were it not for the more loyal of your countrywomen I should be inconsolable. There are many fair damsels here who drank to the King's health."

"More shame!" shouted Tallmadge. "More shame to you!" he cried, pointing accusingly towards a bevy of Whig women surrounded by their British lovers. "You are traitors all, and unfit for such patriots as fight in cold and hunger, or rot in prisons. Shame! Shame! Hide your heads, every one of you! Come, Robert, this is no place for honest men and for a loyal woman."

He led the way towards the door. Elizabeth took Robert's uninjured arm and curtsied deeply to the Admiral and the General, who made stiff and unwilling bows. Robert saluted briefly and looked Rutherford squarely in the eye.

"On the field, sir, where even a gentleman may run a red-coated cur through."

The two men looked death at each other, and Rutherford, speechless with rage, was unable to reply as Robert and Elizabeth moved to depart.

"Elizabeth! Elizabeth!" cried Peter, wild with anger and defeat.

She lifted her head proudly. "It is too late," she said.

"It is not too late," roared Peter, now as angry as a maddened bull. "Stop!" he added, making a move forward and stretching out his arm as if to hold Robert. "My Lord," he said to Howe, his voice shaking in rage, "how is it that you suffer this man and his companion to depart? They are rebels within our lines and subject to arrest. Pray hold them, my Lord."

Robert smiled. "I fear you will not have the pleasure," he said. "We are within the lines on safe conducts, signed by Lord Percy, and we are entitled to protection until noon to-morrow, when we take our leave." He reached within his pocket and produced a paper, and Tallmadge did the same. The General examined them closely, with his brother and Peter looking over his shoulder. Apparently the suddenness and daring with which the two had made their appearance had completely deprived every mind of the thought which Peter alone had remembered. Howe reluctantly folded the papers and handed them back.

"They seem regular," he admitted, "but I must regret Lord Percy's generosity in the matter. How-

ever, until noon," he laid a heavy emphasis on the words, "that generosity shall not be violated."

Robert bowed. "I thank you, my Lord. Pardon me if I cannot share your regrets."

"Elizabeth," said Peter, white with rage, "I forbid you to stir from this room with that man."

"Sir," said Elizabeth, and there was a ring in her voice he had never heard, "I take no more commands from you. I am of age and you have no right to control my actions. I have obeyed you thus far only because it was not in my power to do otherwise. Now it is different." She turned to Robert, but Peter, fairly blind with the passion that had towered in him, flung himself towards Robert with his arm upraised. He was caught by André and Captain Cathcart and forcibly restrained.

"Calm yourself, sir," said the General. "Why not let your niece share Mr. Dalrymple's safe conduct?" There was a sneer in his voice. Peter, panting, endeavored to shake himself loose from the grasp that held him, while the guests fell into a new commotion.

"Come quickly," urged Tallmadge. He led the way as he spoke and they passed out under the illuminated arch, down the long glittering ballroom and out under the rose-garlanded doorway, Elizabeth looking every inch a queen, even though her knight

were not in kingly array. Every man in the room watched her enviously, while among the women tongues began to buzz in aught but admiration, and the epithets that were hissed behind dainty fans were worse than "traitor." As they disappeared the two young officers who had held Peter back released him from their hold, though his heavy breathing and purple face bespoke his fierce mood.

Sir William affected to laugh. "Do not take it so much to heart, Peter," he said. "This is a most extraordinary rebellion, and I shall have a tale to tell of this when I get home. You have indeed prepared a unique entertainment, André. Have you any other surprising feature in store?"

"Sir," said André, gravely, "I bade no imprisoned rebels to this fête."

"Well, there was at least one unimprisoned rebel in hoop and stays," said the General, more lightly. "This insurrection is all an affair of petticoats, eh, Peter?"

"Yes, my Lord, as is all the trouble in the world."

"Tush! Some of these fair dames will hear you. What next, André?"

"The ballroom awaits your Lordships' presence. Cathcart, pray have the herald sound the trumpet again."

CHAPTER XX

Not To-Morrow—To-Day

IT was but a few moments until Robert and Elizabeth were alone. Tallmadge, who was thoroughly acquainted with the winding walks and retired nooks on the country seat of Thomas Wharton, where the fête was given, had conducted them to a small bower just off a path, within hearing of the music and mildly illumined by the great wax lanterns that were hung all over the grounds. Here, safe from intrusion and guarded by Tallmadge, who smoked and paced in a walk at a discreet distance, the lovers were left in privacy in their first meeting for more than a year and a half.

Neither had spoken in that brief journey from the ballroom. Robert's heart was pounding fiercely at his ribs, and in his ears was a strange roaring. The lights flashed redly before his eyes, and though he felt the warmth of Elizabeth's arm through his worn shirt, and drank in the fragrance of her hair as the unaccustomed sweetness smote his nostrils, his head felt oddly detached from his body and his legs seemed to give under him.

Elizabeth, pierced by strange tremors, was overcome by a swift and certain reaction in that brief passage in the cool darkness. Out from under the glare of the lights, released from the spell of many hard eyes, the heroic tension snapped. The tender familiarity of the night, the old, sweet contact with her lover, sweet as the first kiss, and sweeter yet with the added poignancy that flavors joy after the long, dull pain of separation, rushed in upon her and shook her to the foundations of her life. Her womanhood grew years in stature while they took that short walk.

The first moment they were alone they gazed incredulously at each other. Her beauty almost blinded Robert. He looked at the delicate curve of her bosom above her bodice as the first man might have looked at the first woman. She thought not of her loveliness, nor knew of it. The sadly altered lines of his face terrified her. He put out his hand and touched her arm with a timid, remote gesture.

Her faint but agonized cry thrilled him into life. There was a hoarse sound in his throat as he kissed her time and again, pressing her in his free right arm until its bony strength held her warm supple body close against his poor, starved frame in an embrace of elemental power. Moments passed, speechless for both until the extremity of their long-denied love had been relieved by caresses that meant life. When at

last they looked sanely into each others' eyes again, both were in tears.

"Oh, my poor boy," sobbed Elizabeth, "they have almost killed you! Robert! Robert! Your arm! That scar!" She laid her cheek on his bandaged arm with such a gesture as one would use to a sick child, and then kissed the closely-drawn lint straps with infinite pathos.

"My arm is all right, and the scar isn't anything. It's getting well now, and I'm well, well and strong. Don't grieve, Bess. Sweetheart, look up into my eyes. Oh, my God! If I had not remembered that look all these months I should have died! I used to see it at night when I looked out through the air-port. Bess, do you love me?"

When the passionate whispered vows of their affection had died into wordless silence, Elizabeth saw that Robert was deadly pale, and his body was trembling.

"Oh, sit down!" she cried. "My darling, you are ill, faint, hungry perhaps. I will call Colonel Tallmadge and have him bring you some wine."

She pushed him down into a large rustic seat. He grasped her hands and drew her down beside him.

"No," he said. "I am neither ill nor hungry, and I want nothing but you for my food and wine. I do not weigh as much as I did once, and ——" He made a long pause, while Elizabeth painfully noted the evi-

dence of his physical weakness in his short breath and the violent and irregular fluttering of his heart under his faded blue tunic. He caught his breath resolutely and added: "I'm not very strong. It was a hard ride from New York. I was exchanged only day before yesterday, and Tallmadge told me that your uncle had brought you over to the fête, and we came at once. Stay here a while with me, dearest, and tell me about yourself. I have known scarcely anything all these accursed months. We can be together for a little while, and then Tallmadge will take me to a friend's house for the rest of the night, and to-morrow you shall be mine. We will be wed, Bess, without delay, and you will find yourself the wife of a man with only one arm until the other one mends, but I'll do my best to make one do duty for two."

He made good his words. A strain of music came to them from the ballroom where the fête had swung into hilarious merriment. Elizabeth lifted her head from Robert's shoulder.

"Listen!" she said. "The dancers! Oh, how glad I am to be here with you! It is too good to be true. Robert, am I dreaming, or is it true?"

"It is no dream. It is true, as true as that you will be my wife to-morrow."

She blushed divinely. "Your wife, Robert, yes; but not to-morrow. It was midnight before supper

was over, and now it is morning. To-day, sweetheart, not to-morrow."

She nestled against him as one bird might against another in the nest. Despite the radiance of her beauty, a loveliness that was all alluring in curve and softness and color and tempting outline, the purity and sweetness of her soul illumined her with spiritual grace. Robert, out of the ship's inferno, felt as though waves of light and perfume penetrated him.

"To-day, then, and let to-day be all eternity, and every moment now." He drew her closer to him half tenderly, half fiercely.

"You are cold," she whispered, as his cheek touched hers. The hour just before the dawn was slipping away, and the air that swept into the little bower was indeed chilled with the rawness of spring. Tallmadge had thrown his cloak about him and sat motionless on a wooden seat beyond hearing, a faithful sentinel. Elizabeth gave one look at Robert's pallid face, his illy-clad figure, and then with one motion of her arm she gathered up her sweeping golden train, and drawing his head down on her shoulder, she threw the shimmering folds about them both in a yellow silken flood that submerged the two forms in one covering. His head sank lower than her shoulder, and as she felt his hard, bony frame relax against the warm suppleness of her own body, and heard the long inward

quiver of relief that ran through him, the deeper mystery of love surged up in her woman's breast, and with the affection of a mother for her child she poured out towards him a flood of maternal love that swept them to that supreme height where the bliss of heaven on earth is given to those who love and suffer and are faithful. At intervals they spoke in low tones and in brief, broken sentences, but their joy was too acute for many words, and chiefly they dwelt in the perfect communion of silence. Then they entered into the details necessary for the contemplated marriage, and Robert explained that Elizabeth was to go to the house of a relative of Tallmadge and be met there at ten o'clock by himself and Tallmadge, accompanied by the minister and be married at once, after which they would leave the city and go straight to Washington's camp at Valley Forge.

"We must go now," he finished, "if you expect to get anything out of your uncle's house before he returns. Do you think it is safe to go?"

"Yes; I believe that even he would not attempt to stop me now after I have openly defied him. He knows that I have his own blood in me, and I have long told him what I would do the minute you were free."

"Well, we must be off at any rate. I'm not certain that some trick won't be turned on me,

though I'm supposed to be perfectly safe. We will shake the dust of this town off of our feet some time before noon. Kiss me good-bye now until you are my wife."

When their lips had parted, after more than one kiss, Robert arose and carefully spread Elizabeth's train out in all its rippling yellow sheen and looked at her from head to foot.

"The Knight of the Broken Arm and the Battered Head swears that his lady of the Golden Robe is as superior to the ladies of the Blended Rose and the ladies of the Burning Mountain in wit, beauty, virtue and accomplishments as the sun is to a tallow candle. Lady, on my knee, accept my homage."

He knelt and kissed first her hand and then the tip of her dainty satin slipper. She took from her bodice a knot of perfumed lace and ribbon where it had lain against her heart, and handed it to him.

"Accept my favor, Knight of the Broken Arm and the Battered Head, and guard this token well."

"With my life." He pressed it to his lips and then thrust it into the bosom of his shirt. Gay voices, the roll of wheels and the bustle of departing revelers came to them in snatches.

"The fête is over," said Robert. "We must go at once. Without fail at ten, Bess?"

"Without fail."

"Ben!" called Robert. Tallmadge, pipe in hand, appeared.

"The last ones are leaving," he said. "André just told me that Peter was going to have the grounds searched for Miss Windham. My carriage is ready, and if you come at once we can go out by a private way and I can drive you to your aunt's house before he gets home. That will give you time to deliver yourself into the hands of your maid behind a locked door before he can resume operations."

"Ben, you have saved us both. I'll match you against Howe himself. Come quickly, and let us throw the old fox off the trail."

They followed Tallmadge through winding ways to the edge of the grounds unseen and entered the coach.

It was four o'clock, and light with the first soft pink radiance of a May morning. As they rolled swiftly away a red-coated colonel of infantry who had dallied with much wine supported himself against a budding maple and hiccoughed: "God save the King!"

The three in the coach looked at one another.

"His Majesty needs some one to save him from his own officers," said Tallmadge. "Miss Windham, I trust that you enjoyed the fête."

CHAPTER XXI

Dalrymple Is Arrested

THE half hour that Peter spent in searching the grounds for his niece gave the party time to make good their escape. As they sped along Tallmadge instructed Elizabeth to rouse her maid, exchange her ball gown for a simple one suitable for such a journey as they were about to undertake, and on no account to try to take away more than Julia could comfortably pack in one small bag.

"You are to be the wife of an officer of the Continental army," he said, "and I assure you the wives of the officers at Valley Forge are in plain raiment and without any show. Mrs. Washington has spent most of the winter knitting socks for our barefoot men, though her kind offices could not provide for the army, and in most of the huts the men have taken turns sitting up all night by a little fire to keep from freezing. We have not had a season of feasting."

"I shall be honored to join that company," said Elizabeth, her heart in her voice. "I have not had the pleasure of meeting the lady of General Washing-

ton, but if she is as agreeable as he is himself I know I shall love her."

"The soldiers adore her, but the same can be said of both. We shall be at your aunt's house in a moment; we will assist you to alight, drive off and return in exactly half an hour, when you are to appear at the door and accompany us."

"If she is not locked up," said Robert.

"Uncle Peter will not dare to," said Elizabeth, haughtily. Her spirits had risen; the adventure, the danger of discovery, the new tingling of her nerves under the strange and exciting experiences of the night, spurred her blood to a quick circulation that buoyed her up in the seventh heaven.

"I'm not sure what he will or will not dare," replied Tallmadge. "It is quite sure that we must not waste any time."

The coach drew up as he spoke. Robert got out and helped Elizabeth to alight, saying: "Make haste. Remember, half an hour, not a minute more, a plain gown and bring no fripperies."

"As you say," returned Elizabeth, laughing. "I am evidently to be a bride without a bride's privileges."

She ran up the steps of the low stoop as gaily as if on the lightest and most sportive errand in the world, instead of encountering a dangerous hazard before

either she or Robert would be safe, but she was under the influence of the excitement of happiness, which has a more potent delirium than any wine.

She was admitted by Joe, the old colored servitor who had been with Mrs. Wilkinson for years, and who appeared rubbing his eyes and only half awake.

"I 'clar to goodness, is dat you, Miss Bess! 'Pears like I jus' shut my eyes dis minute. Whar's Marse Peter?"

"He was detained to speak with Lord Howe, and sent me home with an escort. Go back to bed, Joe, and finish your morning nap." She hastened up the stairs as she dismissed the servant and entering her room aroused Julia. Five minutes later, the maid, as much excited as her mistress, was engaged in the duties of the toilet with her eyes bulging and exclamations of amazement breaking from her, as she flew hither and thither, drew out various garments and hastily folded them into the traveling bag.

"Not that pink satin bodice, Julia," said Elizabeth, as the girl laid out a dainty waist. "Get plain things, as I told you. Where is my gray gown? I shall wear that."

"Beg pardon, Miss Bess. I'se so consternated wid dis news dat I doan know what I'se erbout. Fo' de Lawd, but won't dat Miss Peggy Shippen done have

conniptions when she fin' out dat you get to elope befo' her! Dat girl been flirtin' wid ebery officer in dis town all winter. I hear a lot 'bout her goings on."

"Oh, Peggy did quite a neat little turn herself last night. I was too much excited to pay particular attention, but I'm sure they had to cut her stays off of her. I wouldn't lace like that for anything."

"No, Miss Bess, an' you never would have to with dat waist. Jus' wait till I hook you up. Lawd! I wonder what dat Mr. Dalrymple do the first time he sees dat lovely hair runnin' all over your white shoulders!"

Elizabeth took a final glimpse of herself in the little glass and saw a lovely, flushed face above the gray gown. "We have not a minute to spare," she said. "Julia, go and look out and see if any one is stirring below."

The girl reconnoitred and reported that all was quiet and then took up her post at one window, while Elizabeth stationed herself at another to see the carriage approach. They had scarcely settled themselves when Elizabeth saw it turn the corner and with a smothered exclamation of joy that they were not discovered they stole quietly down the stairs and were ready to enter as the coach rolled up the still deserted street. Hardly had they disappeared from view when Peter turned his horses homeward, rage,

disappointment and mortification waging bitterly in his heart.

He had been induced to remain at the fête by the combined entreaties of Howe, André, Cathcart and others, all of whom had assured him that for the present, as nothing could be done to restrain the young lady short of actual force, it would be best to leave her alone. He had at first acquiesced in this view, but repeated visits to the punch bowl had changed his mind, and he had announced that he would search the grounds, search the city, if necessary, find his disobedient niece and put her under lock and key to keep her from disgracing herself by marrying a rebel, the "rebel" being qualified by a list of sulphurous adjectives too vehement to repeat here. His search of the grounds had availed nothing, as André, who was unwilling for anything unpleasant to happen to Elizabeth, had warned Tallmadge just in time. As Peter approached the house Rutherford on horseback reined up by the side of the coach and said:

"Well, Peter, accept my congratulations on your niece's husband. They made a fine looking couple, didn't they?" He laughed and flicked his whip.

"Damn it!" roared Peter. "He isn't her husband yet."

"No; but it doesn't take a parson long to tie the

knot for a hot-footed pair. I don't suppose you'll lock Miss Windham in the garret on bread and water."

"Egad! I'd like to. By heaven, Rutherford, I wish you'd got the girl! I'm sick of this damned country, and I'd like for us all to go to England. Would you resign your commission?"

"I'd resign my hopes of heaven," said Rutherford, with a deep oath, "but it's over. That puppy!" He shut his jaws with a snap.

"Ay," cried Peter, spilling snuff out of his box in his agitation. "'Tis a pity there's not a way to fix the slithering jackanapes."

"Hold!" fairly shouted Rutherford. "I have it! Dolt that I was not to think of it before!" He wheeled his mount and dashed off in the opposite direction, leaving Peter almost falling out of his coach as he vainly craned his neck after him.

"What can it be?" he mused to himself as he entered the door. "There may be a way yet. Zounds! I wonder if she's here!" He knocked on Elizabeth's door and was answered by silence. Again he knocked and called her name and then Julia's. As his hand fell heavily on the door in his haste the half closed latch gave way, the door flew open and he stood gaping on the threshold at the sight that met his eyes, the wordless evidences of flight that told all

without possibility of doubt. His loud cry brought Joe fully awake now and startled to hear his master's voice in such tone.

"Joe!" shouted Peter, "where is she? Where is Elizabeth? Answer me, black dolt." He stamped his foot, quivering from head to foot.

"Fo' de Lawd, sah," answered the trembling negro, "I doan know whar Miss Bess can be, an' dat Julia too. I done let Miss Bess in dis house not an hour ago, and she tole me dat you'd be here soon. I saw her come up dis stairway wid my own eyes."

Peter groaned and sank into a chair. "Gone! Gone!" he ejaculated. "Send Mrs. Fitzmorris here at once," he added.

"Yes, sah," replied Joe, thankful not to be ordered a whipping. He started to run and nearly fell over the lady herself coming in at the door with every evidence of agitation on her face. She was not as beautiful as if she were queen of the May, for the cries of Peter and Joe had summoned her from her bed in nightgown and curl-papers, her cap set awry on her head and her feet in carpet slippers completing her toilet.

"What has happened?" she asked. Peter pointed to the empty bed, and her eyes rapidly swept the room, taking in the disarray of the wardrobe, the

dressing drawers and toilet table, and she gave an hysterical cry. "God's mercy!" she shrieked, "what is this?"

"Elizabeth has gone," said Peter. "Gone, do you hear, with that infernal Whig rebel Dalrymple, who has carried her off God knows where!"

Mrs. Fitzmorris promptly gave way to her nerves and holding up her hands gave vent to shriek after shriek until Peter angrily told her to shut up. "One would think you never tried to elope yourself," he added. "Have you forgotten that little affair of Jack Thompson, when the rope broke on you and you were locked up in your room for a week?"

"I am chilled," answered Mrs. Fitzmorris, waiving the question. "She is gone, Peter, but I know nothing of it. Let us go to the dining-room while you tell me about it. I always knew she would do something to disgrace us."

Peter in the dining-room had resource to the decanter and then told the story of the night, interrupted by many exclamations. When he had finished, though still excited, he was calmer and declaring that he would not rest until he had found her and brought her back he sent for Joe, ordered the carriage, and went to his room to make a change of clothing. Scarcely fifteen minutes later, having hastily partaken of a cup of coffee, he rode away from the house

accompanied by the black, and Mrs. Fitzmorris returned to her duties as hostess to several of the younger British officers who were quartered on her, and who came trooping in from the ball anxious to learn the outcome of the scene that had transpired before their eyes, in the midst of the fête.

At ten o'clock Elizabeth, having had a couple of hours' rest and a light breakfast, was at the head of the stairway in the hospitable home of Mrs. Kent, Tallmadge's relative, an ardent Whig lady who was delighted with the prospect of a romantic wedding under her roof. A few friends had been hastily summoned and all was in readiness. Julia hovered near Elizabeth constantly, assuring her for the thousandth time that she looked "jus' like a angel," and Elizabeth herself, as the moments flew by towards the hour set for her happiness was conscious that the lighter excitement of a few hours previous had settled into a deeper and more heartfelt emotion that concentrated itself in the sacred name of wife that lay deep within her heart. Ten o'clock came and went, and when a few moments had passed and neither Robert nor Tallmadge appeared a certain uneasiness obtained a hold on every one save Elizabeth, who smiled and did not seem to pay any attention to it. When fifteen minutes had gone even the clergyman seemed disturbed, and Mrs. Kent went up-stairs to Elizabeth.

"Do not be alarmed," she said. "It seems odd that they are not here, but something has undoubtedly detained them for a brief time only. Do not give way to any agitation now that will spoil your looks at the last moment."

Elizabeth was pale but composed, and said cheerfully: "I am not alarmed, but any delay now is very trying. You see, the time is so short."

The sound of running feet in the hall below attracted the attention of both, and Mrs. Kent went to the door, while Julia slipped by her and halfway down the stairway. In less than a moment the girl was back in the room, a ghastly color under her mulatto skin, and crying and moaning she ran to Elizabeth, threw herself on the floor at her feet and burst into a flood of tears. Frightened, Elizabeth rose as Mrs. Kent approached her saying: "My dear, my dear, be brave, be ——"

"Oh, what is it?" cried Elizabeth. "What is it?" she cried again. She ran by Mrs. Kent and fairly flew down the stairway almost to the foot before she saw that Peter was there surrounded by the guests who had flocked out of the parlor into the wide entry hall. She stopped short, shocked into inaction by the unexpected sight. Peter's face had gone white. He stepped towards her and spoke calmly and with grave authority.

"Elizabeth, come home. Lieutenant Dalrymple is under arrest."

She neither spoke nor moved. Then, as Peter took hold of her arm and repeated his words, she staggered and with a faint cry fell senseless in his arms.

CHAPTER XXII

As A Friend

ELIZABETH passed through a fiery trial during the next two weeks, and soon realizing that for the time being all she could do was to submit, she summoned all her courage and went through it with a fortitude of which she herself was not conscious, but which commanded the admiration even of Mrs. Fitzmorris, who, in a somewhat restricted old age, found it difficult to care for much beyond her own personal comfort. Peter, distracted by the stand Elizabeth took, deep in convivial intercourse with Howe and other officers, and fearing too for a change of fortunes with the alliance of the French, was not entirely happy, even with Robert removed. For he disappeared entirely. Philadelphia was, of course, under martial law, and although it was beyond the code to arrest an exchanged prisoner on a purely flimsy pretext, Rutherford had succeeded in having it done, and so rigidly was Robert secluded and so closely was he guarded that not one word could be heard from him.

But Rutherford was completely discomfited by

Elizabeth's attitude. He had expected when she heard of Robert's arrest, that she would be willing to make some terms with him for his release. But in this he was mistaken. Elizabeth sent him word that she would not see him, refused to receive the messages he sent, and finally dispatched Julia to him to say that she had no use for his services and that when she sought assistance she would look to others. With this word she also returned the basket of fruit he had sent, and Rutherford, enraged and humiliated, left the house at his wits' ends. As a matter of fact, Robert's arrest, even in a state of war, was such a high-handed proceeding that Rutherford was secretly ashamed of it, and had he not had the countenance of Howe, who privately winked at it because of his wounded vanity on the night of the fête, he would speedily have found a means of having him liberated. He took good care, though, that Robert was well treated, and when word was brought that the prisoner craved the opportunity of a few words with him, he promptly declined and drank deeply.

Peter was for returning to New York at once, as the safest means of removing Elizabeth permanently from the neighborhood of a lover who, even though under arrest and secluded in a British prison, somehow seemed to be mysteriously dangerous. His design to leave was strongly combated by Mrs. Fitz-

morris, who had from the first lent a willing ear to vague rumors that the army might evacuate Philadelphia, her terror at the thought of remaining at the mercy of the Whigs being perhaps justified in a measure by recollections of the treatment she had meted out to them. No house in the city was better known as a Tory headquarters than hers, and with Peter there her gratification was great. None of their Tory guests did Elizabeth meet after the fête, save André, who waited upon her to assure her that he had had no part in the detention of her lover. Although true to the day of his death to the girl who had some time since wedded the wealthy young widower Edgeworth, he was plastic to female charms, and Elizabeth had attracted him strongly.

"I do not need to bid you keep up courage," he said to her at the conclusion of a long talk, "for you are already so brave that you might set an example to any soldier. Lieutenant Dalrymple is to be envied in his confinement to have the loyalty of so true a heart, and I would willingly change places with him for the privilege." His soft brown eyes looked not coldly into her own.

"What, treason!" laughed Elizabeth.

"I hold Lieutenant Dalrymple in the light of an enemy," replied André, "and as a soldier he must suffer the fortunes of war, but it is not treason to offer

one's self a ransom for the queen's pleasure." He touched the tips of her fingers lightly and added: "And now I must go. I have come to you as a friend, not as one of His Majesty's officers, and as a friend I say that your sweetheart is not a man to remain behind bars. My word for it 'tis only a question of time before you see him again."

"Heaven bless you," said Elizabeth, fervently. "I feel so myself, and the thought buoys me up, otherwise I could not bear it. Oh, Major André, it was such happiness to see him again, even in his wretched plight, and the hours we spent together after we left the ball were the happiest of my life." She paused abruptly, blushing deeply, and then said: "Oh, do not think me unwomanly, Major André, I am sure you will understand. You have said you come to me as a friend, not as a soldier, and I know that, but I say to you as a soldier and apart from our friendship, that I pray every night for the triumph of our arms and the ending of this cruel war which is causing nothing but misery."

André had listened in grave silence. He fixed his eyes intently on her and said in a tone of deepest feeling: "From your point of view, Miss Windham, you are right, and I honor you for your sentiments. For myself, as I have told you many times before, I hold no enmity towards the Colonists, and were it not for

the fascination of a military life I would not be on these shores. You are a woman, and I fear such a reason may not appeal to you, but when the war is over I assure you of my intention of remaining a decent private citizen to the end of my days to atone for this career in search of fame. Does that suit you?"

Elizabeth's eyes filled with mischief. "Yes; but I give you fair warning that if you stay on these shores you will have to be a subject of His Excellency, General Washington, for you know he will be the head of our new nation."

"Mademoiselle, I fight only men," sighed André, "and besides one may not contradict a lady. I bid you adieu."

The order for the evacuation of the city followed hard on the fête. The revelings were at an end, and terror took hold on the Tories, who by the thousands prepared to leave with the fleet, while those who decided to remain placed themselves under the protection of Clinton. The Tory portion of the population was stricken with fear at the thought of the Delaware being blockaded by the French fleet, and as D'Estaing had indeed sailed with twelve ships-of-the-line and three frigates, the city was destined to a new order of things within a brief period. Mrs. Fitzmorris had the news brought to her one morning when Peter was

out, and Elizabeth was obliged to soothe the lady's hysterics as best she might.

"Oh, where is Peter?" she wailed. "Send for him, Elizabeth, and stay here with me. Oh, let us all go at once, before we are murdered!"

"Be quiet, aunt," said Elizabeth, with the nearest approach to sternness she had ever achieved. "You know perfectly well that no one will be murdered. For my part, I shall not be sorry to see the army go."

"Of course you won't care," sobbed Mrs. Fitzmorris, "you ought to be ashamed of yourself to be such a rebel. Oh, I shall lose everything!" The unhappy woman groaned in real distress, for it was indeed a sore trial to think of parting with the elegant furniture and possessions which were as the apple of her eye, and which had been treated with such marked respect by the British officers.

"Lose everything!" echoed Elizabeth. "Lose everything! Oh, aunt, how little you know what that means!"

Mrs. Fitzmorris' complaining reply was cut short by the entrance of Peter, red and flurried with the sad information.

"We must get out," he announced, mopping his brow. "Everybody will leave. More than three thousand will sail with Howe. Everything is going

to the devil; the rebels are going to come in here and burn the city."

Mrs. Fitzmorris shrieked.

"What the devil's the matter with you?" demanded Peter. "We'll be all right, but we've got to get out, got to get out. No use of crying over spilled milk; the game's up, and that's all there is about it. I've just come from Sir Henry, and he advises us to travel to New York under the protection of the troops, as many others will do, and so we will. We can't be loaded down with luggage, so take only what is absolutely necessary, and don't do so much howling, Eliza. There's only a miserable lot of beggars over there in Valley Forge with that Mr. Washington, and there are thirty thousand of the King's men in the city."

He looked at Elizabeth. In his excitement he had for once almost forgotten her presence. Now it occurred to him that she would want to remain and be with the friends of the cause she espoused. But her next words mystified him.

"Go to New York with Sir Henry," she exclaimed. "Oh!" She stopped short, evidently not finishing with what was in her mind, but her face was transfigured with a brilliant smile, and her eyes were fastened on Peter in a fervent gaze.

"Yes, lass. 'Tis the best we can do, and you need not be ——"

"Tell me," interrupted Elizabeth, "does Sir Henry take with him all of—of the army?"

"All, save the portion that goes back to England with Lord Howe as escort. Yes, everything, accoutrements, baggage, men, women and children, babes in arms for aught I know. We will be moved like munitions of war."

"All," breathed Elizabeth. "All! Oh, we cannot go too soon!" She rose and hurriedly left the room.

"Is she daft?" asked Peter, staring.

"'Tis you that is daft!" cried Mrs. Fitzmorris. "Have you forgotten that Dalrymple is a prisoner under Sir Henry? The girl is crazed with delight at thought of being near him."

"Zounds!" shouted Peter, striking his knee, violently. "That's true. I was so disturbed with this news that I had forgotten the beggar. But for all that she'll not get to see him. He'll be far enough from us under a strong guard, and once in New York there are jails and prisons there where he's like to stay. There's enough to do, Eliza, so make what preparations you can. The coach will be ready day and night."

Philadelphia lived in a turmoil until the troops were gone. On the morning of the eighteenth of June the army, with its long train of artillery, baggage, prisoners, fleeing citizens and the indescribable nondescript

belongings of a retreating host, stole away and crossed the Delaware at Gloucester Point, and by evening were encamped at Haddonfield, but a few miles from Camden. That night the opposing armies of Clinton and Washington slept on different soil, and in the British camp one prisoner under guard and a maiden lay awake far into the morning hours, separated indeed, but seeking each other with that searching of the spirit which is the telepathy of love.

CHAPTER XXIII

Fly, Robert, Fly!

THE heat became excessive while Clinton's retreating train, twelve miles long, pursued its slow and uneven way, snake-like, along the Jersey roads towards New York. Peter, Elizabeth and her aunt knew the discomforts of camp life in full before that week was over, but Elizabeth, enlivened by the thought of being near Robert, attained a height of cheerfulness at which occasionally her aunt grumbled, only to be met by sweet smiles and serene replies.

Life was anything but colorless during that flight, and social features were not lacking, for they were accompanied by many friends and acquaintances of Mrs. Fitzmorris, and day after day found them visiting each other's tents, coaches and conveyances, entertaining various officers at dinner, and receiving gifts of eggs, chickens, fruit, milk and other delicacies which from being Whig property speedily became converted into Tory assets at the approach of the army. The loyalty of Peter and Mrs. Fitzmorris was promptly put to the test, for Peter's four fine bays, behind

which he had traveled from New York to Philadelphia and which were the pride of his heart, were replaced on the first day by two base-born animals that were more useful than lovely. Peter was sad at heart because of this, but when on the second day Rutherford told him that the coach must be used for two elderly ladies who had fallen ill, he forgot himself and complained.

"Is this your return for the hospitality enjoyed at my house and at Mrs. Fitzmorris'?" he demanded. "You know, sir, that I have two females with me, both gentlewomen and accustomed to the comforts of life, and it is scarcely fair that they should suffer for others."

Rutherford laughed.

"My dear sir," he replied, "'tis not my wish. I should be only too glad to add to the comfort of yourself and your party, but I present a personal request from Sir Henry, and there's no help for it. There are some seventeen thousand of the army, and no fewer than about three thousand of our friends from Philadelphia are traveling with us to New York, and what with the aged and infirm, the sick, the infants, the prisoners, and God knows what trash tagged on, we are moving like snails now. Mr. Washington is following us, and Sir Henry and Lord Cornwallis are not anxious to engage in battle while

thus encumbered. You and yours will be cared for. I can provide you with a fairly good saddle-horse, brought in from an outlying farmhouse this morning, and Mrs. Fitzmorris and Miss Windham will be in a wagon with good springs and a mattress, which I provided myself. With them will be Mrs. and Miss Thornton, and I will see to it that Miss Windham's maid follows. Jove, man! 'Tis not every fair rebel would be allowed to travel in state thus with the King's army. Give her my compliments and tell her it is a special favor from me."

"She will receive your courtesy with a sorry grace, Rutherford, as you know. I need not ask if that would-be bridegroom is receiving any particular honors."

"Not from me. He's watched close enough, too. No exchange or escape this time for my fine gentleman, and no love-notes smuggled, but I've a report every day from the guard, and he says that he's in mighty fine feather."

"Ugh!" grunted Peter. "It takes a fool to be cheerful under misfortune. He'll sing glum enough when Cunningham's locked him up in New York. Take my coach, Rutherford, and then I've nothing left but the clothes on my back. I hope you'll leave me those."

"Oh, don't worry about that. If we need them I'll

give you a blanket and sequestrate you from the women. Cheer up, man, we'll be all right when we get to New York, and then we'll right about face and give this Mr. Washington a tussle."

Clinton had at first intended on leaving Philadelphia to embark on the Raritan at Brunswick, but as Washington blocked the way he turned at Allentown and marched towards Monmouth Court House, intending to go to Sandy Hook and thence by water to New York. The pitiable condition of the patriot army at Valley Forge had been a theme of ridicule and merriment in the New York and Philadelphia theatres all winter, and the gay young officers and dashing subalterns who had taken the parts in the plays presented, had thrust many a jibe at their sad state, and so frequent had these references become and so bitter was the feeling between rebel and Tory that the playhouses had been filled almost exclusively by the British and their Tory friends. But as Washington pursued Clinton and Cornwallis across New Jersey in those hot June days, he had a force not inconsiderable, about fifteen thousand troops being fit for duty, their physical sufferings much abated with the advent of summer, and the men filled with a new courage since the Congress had ratified the treaty with France. Washington knew that Clinton was not in the best shape for a battle while

conducting a retreat hampered with an immense baggage train and responsible for women and children, and he was cautiously following him on a parallel road, intending to attack him whenever he could find a favorable opportunity. He had with him the best Generals of the army, Wayne, Greene, Lord Stirling, Lafayette, Scott and Maxwell, Ramsey and Stewart, and Knox and Oswald were in command of the artillery. Lee, who was the oldest Major-General, was now in command of the advanced corps, and within a few days was to earn for himself at the ensuing battle that unique and undesirable reputation which history deservedly accords him. Washington was determined that Sir Henry should not occupy the advantageous position of Middletown Heights, near Monmouth Court House, and he fully instructed Lee with regard to his movements.

Had not Elizabeth been separated from Robert, or even had he been with Washington's troops, she would have been happy, for no especial discomfort fell to their lot on that march, and beyond the fatigue of constant traveling it cannot be said that any hardship lay heavily on them. Mrs. Thornton and Mrs. Fitzmorris compared miseries, and suffered more than all the army, but Alice Thornton, who was betrothed to Captain Barrington, of Rutherford's regiment, was a sprightly and engaging girl who made an excellent

companion for Elizabeth. André had provided a cook for their party of ten who messed together, and with the contributions of André, Rutherford and Barrington to the table, every day had its quota of delicacies, for Jersey gardens had not been neglected, and even some hen roosts had escaped the alternate raids of rebels and Tories. The heat increased steadily, and within a few days after leaving Philadelphia they were sweltering in the temperature of August. Never had New Jersey looked lovelier. The whole country was in the full bloom of early summer, and abundant spring rains and the quickly succeeding heat had brought all foliage, crops, gardens and orchards to their fullest estate. But the loyal little state had her resources exhausted in that sunny June, for within a few miles of each other, and traveling in almost parallel directions, two hostile armies, over thirty thousand souls together, marched towards New York and gleaned what had been left from the winter's foraging and nearly all which the industry of spring had provided, and although a crow would not have starved in flying over the route left by the armies, he might have cawed in dissatisfaction at the remnant left for him.

When night fell on the twenty-sixth of June, Clinton and Cornwallis were not far from Washington Court House. The heat was almost unbearable

far into the night, and Alice and Elizabeth talked girls' confidences until midnight, and then, when after a brief silence, Elizabeth addressed Alice again, the girl's measured breathing assured her that her companion slept. They were in separate hammocks in a tent, Julia lay on the ground on a blanket just inside; Mrs. Fitzmorris and Alice's mother were in an adjoining tent, and Peter and several men were camping out for the night under a clump of trees near by.

Elizabeth turned over in her hammock and looked out of the open tent flap. The young moon had set and the night was clear and starlit. Beyond the dark line of the trees she saw the stars' calm radiance in the velvety, mysterious vault, and the love and passion and longing that in the light of day and amid the excitement of the march was shut close in her heart, surged up in such a flood as had not overtaken her since she parted from Robert, and a great wave of pain rolled over her, submerging her will and senses, and acutely attacking every nerve and fibre until she quivered. Bitter rebellion against the fate that pursued their love, resentment for the pangs they had both suffered, arose in her, and the desire to see him for only a moment, to press her lips to his once, to whisper a few words of love in his ear, grew in her like a soul-hunger. More and more she yearned, until spirit and body ached in unison and

she grew faint. She stifled a sob in the roll of her clothing that served for a pillow and cried out inwardly, and as she lay thus the "All's well" of the distant sentinel came to her.

She unclenched her hands and in the sudden swift mental action of a minute the incredible idea formed itself in her brain that she could slip out and go to him. The thought held her motionless with joy for an instant; then, before she stirred, the figure of a man on horseback slowly crossed the open, trampled space beyond the trees, disappeared for a moment, then returned and drew up, almost indiscernible, in a black shadow. Elizabeth knew both horse and rider, and the hopelessness of her love-born idea fell back on her like a blow as she recognized the man to whom she owed the imprisonment of her lover.

Motionless, half breathless, she lay, and although Rutherford was several rods distant she felt that he looked towards her tent, and even through the darkness she could feel his eyes fixed on her. Then through the silence there rang a shot, then another, and then a sharp, scattering fire. Nightly encounters between marauding bands were not uncommon, and as the firing was far in advance Elizabeth was not alarmed. She heard her aunt snoring, but Alice started up and inquired what was the matter.

"Only some raiders outside of the camp no

doubt," she replied. "I don't suppose it's anything serious."

Alice snuggled down and Elizabeth looked again towards the rider in the shade, and saw that the vague outline had not moved. A confused murmur of voices from the group of men indicated that they were unwilling to be disturbed. The firing re-commenced, and this time there was a lively spitting of rifles. The camp aroused, men appeared, going hither and thither, there was hallooing and servants ran through the darkness with lanterns. The shots continued, and it became evident that something more than the usual firing of a raiding party was going on. Rutherford walked his horse over towards the tents, where the feminine screams of the two older women were heard and said in a loud, firm tone: "Do not be alarmed. Nothing of any consequence is happening, and you are perfectly safe."

He had scarcely finished speaking when several ran by the tent uttering broken exclamations as they went. "What's that?" demanded Rutherford, sharply, leaning forward in his saddle. "What did you say?"

"There's been an attack and an escape," panted one of the men. "I don't know who it is."

Hoofs galloped up as the man finished speaking, and a voice which both girls knew cried out: "Is Colonel Rutherford here?"

"Maurice!" cried Alice, almost springing out of her hammock.

"Be quiet," said Elizabeth, drawing her back. "Let us hear the news."

"What is it?" cried Rutherford. As he spoke he moved out into a clear plot of ground before the tents and a passing negro swung the light of a lantern full on his face.

"Attack by a detachment of infantry under Colonel Tallmadge and a company of light horse. They surprised the guard and took three prisoners, but two were recaptured. Lieutenant Dalrymple has escaped."

A loud, clear cry rang out. Every one recognized Elizabeth's voice, and all eyes were turned towards the tent, where she appeared like a high priestess of the night, her long, dark hair unbound and falling over her shoulders and her bare feet peeping from under the loose robe of red stuff she had hastily thrown about her. She thrust out her round, white right arm towards Rutherford and cried: "Ah, Colonel Rutherford, try again!" She threw out both arms appealingly towards the dark expanse lying beyond the small zone of light cast by the lantern and cried, with a force and passion that thrilled those who heard: "Oh, fly, Robert, fly!" She seemed to project herself beyond them with the violence of her emotion.

Alice had followed her, and supported her in her arms as she finished and no one moved but Rutherford, who uttered a deep and tremendous oath. Then he reined his horse nearer the tent, so close that as he leaned down and looked into Elizabeth's eyes he could have touched her, and said in a low tone heard only by the two girls: "Oh, if I had never seen you!" He turned away and called to the Captain: "Come, Barrington. There's not a moment to lose!"

The two men dashed away in the darkness.

CHAPTER XXIV

For Her Sake

THIRTY-SIX hours later the battle of Monmouth was on in full swing. It was Sunday, a hot, brilliant day, the sun scorching down mercilessly from a cloudless sky. The thermometer had ranged near the hundred mark for almost a week, and although on this day, with the reverberation of cannon echoing to the rear of Clinton's baggage train and terrifying the women, no one thought of such a triviality as looking at mercury in a glass tube, the record marked there was memorable for the fatalities it caused, and none of the survivors forgot the suffering they endured from the temperature. Before the sun set on that evening nearly one hundred men died of sunstroke alone, and were found dead on the battlefield without a wound or mark of any kind, and when it is remembered that the official record was ninety-six degrees in the shade, the mortality from the heat can be understood.

The topography of the country was favorable for an open conflict between the two armies, each of whom wished to occupy the desirable promontory of Middle-

town Heights. Clinton knew that Washington wished to engage him, and though he would gladly have avoided it he felt compelled to continue the march to New York on the defensive and as well prepared for an encounter as was possible with his encumbrances. Washington remained in the rear of the American army, and sent Lee ahead with Wayne, Maxwell and Lafayette as his chief officers, instructing him to fall upon Clinton's rear when he moved on the morning of the twenty-eighth.

All the world knows of Lee's cowardly conduct at this battle, of his hesitancy, his confusing and countermanding orders to his generals, of his grudging consent to Lafayette's request to attack the rear of a large division of horse and foot sent by Clinton, and then of his withdrawal of so many regiments that the gallant men Lafayette took into action were almost cut to pieces for lack of support. It is a shameful and familiar tale, and one follows that strange and all but incredible account of a retreat begun before the battle was fairly at flood tide with a sensation of reluctance. And then the panic, the rout, the disorganized and helter-skelter flight of that portion of the army in the advance regiments, until men who should have been calmly loading their muskets on the firing line were running to the rear like rabbits, and all because General Charles Lee, who was disaffected by jealousy and

who had withdrawn his hand from the Bible at the moment of taking the oath of allegiance before Washington, deliberately played into the hands of the enemy that day.

Then came the Chief, Washington, riding like the wind on a charger fit for such a master, and encountering the scurrying fugitives running pell-mell to the nearest shelter. Stung by the wrathful words he flung at them, and awed by the authority of his voice and manner, the fleeing troops had turned back and were engaging their pursuing antagonists when Washington came up with Lee himself, retreating at the head of the second column.

His Excellency had engaged in his devotions earlier in the day, but the profanity with which he is credited when he met his recalcitrant general is equally to his credit. When, having sworn roundly, he thundered out: "Sir, I desire to know the reason, and whence comes this disorder and confusion?" Lee, shamefaced but defiant, replied sullenly: "You know the attack was contrary to my advice and opinion."

"Then," said Washington, still in a towering rage, "you should not have undertaken the command unless you intended to carry it through." His superb figure rose to its full proportions in the saddle as he wilted Lee with his wrath. Turning in righteous rage he swung into the full range of battle, rode up and down

the line in the face of the hottest fire of the enemy, shouting and cheering the men and turning the tide of the day to the American arms. It is an old and familiar story, but glorious enough to shine even through this simple telling, adorned only by the splendid heroism of the one man who ever lived who could have successfully carried our then weak American arms to a triumphal issue with the most powerful antagonist on the globe.

While the brief but historic episode between Washington and Lee was transpiring, the battle had not delayed. Clinton, at first virtually surprised, had quickly rallied and had sent large and fully equipped detachments to attack Wayne, and that unfortunate general, being ordered by Lee to make a feint in attacking, and then being weakened by Lee's withdrawal of three of his best regiments, met with discomfiture which must not be charged to him. As soon as the Chief returned to the fight, Ramsey and Stewart were called from the rear, and Oswald, with two cannon, was posted on an eminence that commanded the British, now sweeping up in battle array with fresh troops in perfect alignment and with the confidence of success in every man's face. But the retreat was now checked, and the British met with unexpected resistance. The field pieces opened fire and the height, with Greene on the right and Lord

Stirling on the left, was crowned with stubborn and homely-clad regiments of the Continentals who now confronted the flower of the British army, about seven thousand strong, that came swarming up a narrow road lined on each side by deep morasses, their red coats fairly blazing in the hot sun that rained down upon them.

It was one of the fiercest and most hotly contested battles of the Revolution, and it raged for many hours. Men were maddened by the heat, and flung themselves face down by any muddy pool they could find to quench a thirst that was unendurable, and then rolled over to die without a struggle from a wound that was mortal ere they drank that last draught. Knox directed the batteries, and it was when the result seemed doubtful that Wayne came up with a regiment and, next to Washington, did more at a critical moment to turn the tide than any other general that day, though it was chiefly due to the fact that after Lieutenant-Colonel Monckton, who came up with the British, was killed the men fell into a panic.

It was when the conflict was raging at its height that two men met. The last time they had seen each other they had looked with hate into one another's eyes in a brilliant hall, surrounded by a gay and gallant company, and then one—the man without the "wedding garment"—had led away a beautiful

woman, while the other had followed him with murder in his heart, for jealousy is a most bitter thing and stops at nothing. Now the man who had carried off the fair prize wore the uniform of a Lieutenant of the Continental army, and the other was in the dress of a Colonel of His Majesty's arms.

When their eyes met each knew the hour had come when all scores would be settled. There was no delay in their encounter. Each was mounted, and both fired at the same moment, only to miss fire as if by preconcerted action. Rutherford lunged at Robert with his sword, but missed him, and his horse went down under him with the explosion of a shell as Wayne's men were reinforced by the batteries of Knox. The British were pouring out of the defile up towards the height, and the fighting was desperate and primitive, on horse, afoot, hand to hand. Men ran each other through with bayonets and then fell calling for water and cursing in awful thirst. Robert saw Rutherford go down, and with a cool and calculating deliberation prepared to dismount and run him through. Before he could get out of his saddle his horse quivered and fell in a heap, pinning Robert under him, but as he went down he saved himself by an old trick of the arm and leg and came out uninjured. As he rolled over he came in contact with Rutherford, and the two men clinched in a struggle of sheer phys-

ical strength on the trampled turf. Both were unarmed now, and in that hell of heat and unchained human passions they fought as two primeval animals might have done.

In first-class condition, they might have been almost an equal match for each other, but now the scale was uneven. Rutherford was larger, or heavier, to be exact, but his muscles were flabby from a winter of drinking and dissipation. Robert was slighter in frame, but he had gained in health and strength ever since he had left the *Jersey* six weeks before, and he was animated by supreme temperamental buoyancy. They grappled in silence, while around them raged the ear-splitting crack of the rifles and the roar of the artillery. Rutherford's eyes were bloodshot and his teeth were set; Robert was deadly pale and his eyes glared with baleful fury, that cold rage of which the clear blue eye is alone capable. Their muscles strained until they might have been heard to crack, had not a tempest of noise swirled about them; each tried in vain to get a final hold on the other, they eluded, slipped, twisted, clutched, all to no purpose, and on a battle-field where death came to men every moment in leaden missiles two men who lay in the very path of the artillery fought bare-handed and could not so much as keep a compelling hold. Their companions bit the dust without intermission, some-

times falling flat on their faces, after the manner of most men killed in battle, or staggering a little and then dropping suddenly with outstretched arms and bayonet point digging in the earth.

The singing of bullets was always like a wild, maddening music to Robert, and their sinister zip-zip-zip went to his brain now and set up a more furious whirlwind than the ride of the Valkyries ever stirred in the blood. He was obsessed with a cold fury, and he knew that death would pass this man by until he took his revenge in his own way.

Then fate held out the weapon. A man rolled over near Robert and he took from the still warm hand his sword and poised it above Rutherford, ready to plunge it into his heart. As he gloated in that brief instant Rutherford spoke: "I do not ask quarter," he said. "Go ahead." He closed his eyes and seemed to cease to breathe. In that moment of non-resistance he saved his life. The momentum of Robert's arm was already swinging downward, but in that second of inaction a fragment of a spent shell shattered the weapon in his hand and scattered it harmlessly beyond. Even as it glinted in bits in the blinding sun the long-delayed bullets found their way, and one scraped Robert's neck and made a flesh wound whence the blood trickled down, and another struck Rutherford in his left leg, near the thigh.

The dripping of the warm blood within his shirt recalled Robert to his senses. He put his hand to his throat, hastily withdrew it and with a half uttered cry thrust it inside of his tunic and drew out a tiny, crumpled bit of lace and ribbon, whose edges were touched with blood. It was as if a madness had passed with the sight of that simple object. Rutherford, his eyes wide open now, and his face drawn with the pain of his wound, looked blankly at Robert, who pressed it to his lips, as if it were the sacrament, and then, leaning over Rutherford he said: "For her sake I spare your life. She would not have me shed your blood."

Rutherford, convulsed with pain, attempted to answer, but all his dry and parched lips would utter was "Water." Robert hastily fastened a handkerchief about the flesh wound in his own throat, and then rose and looked about him. There was no abatement of the fighting; redcoats still swarmed out of the narrow defile, and dead men filled the morasses by the side of the road. Robert carefully drew Rutherford away from the zone of the firing line and laid him under the shade of a tree with as much solicitude as though a few moments before he had not attempted his life. Rutherford was almost unconscious when Robert finally laid him under the tree, and the blood was flowing from his wound.

Robert took off his socks and stanched the flow as well as he was able and then went in search of water.

It was at the moment when the gallant Lieutenant-Colonel Monckton, in command of British grenadiers, led his men to a bayonet charge against Wayne's troops, hoping to dislodge him and storm the eminence where the batteries of Knox were making havoc in his ranks. There had long been a tradition in the British army that the Continentals could not stand a bayonet charge, and Monckton, waving his sword and leading the way in the face of the fire with loud shouts, came up the slope directly in the path of Robert. It was the last hour for the brave young officer. He was shot and instantly killed at the outset of the charge.

As he fell the fighting centred around Robert again. The Continentals rushed forward and met the assault with a furious defense that checked the advance. Robert had a sword thrust into his hand by a young private, who said: "It's over for me," and fell heavily. He fought fiercely in that last desperate encounter of the battle, and more than one of the enemy fell before him. Within a few minutes from the time Monckton led the bayonet charge, the well-directed fire from the batteries had killed or mortally wounded nearly every British officer within

range, and the troops, panic-stricken at the sight of their dead and dying commanders, began to fall back, and when the "retreat" floated out from the bugle and the British began to press towards the narrow defile whence they had come up, the battle was virtually won for the Americans, though fighting continued all over the field in places until dusk.

It was now about the middle of the afternoon, and Robert, almost exhausted from the heat and his exertions, leaned heavily against a tree under which lay a pile of dead bodies. As he tried to collect himself, General Wayne and two of his staff rode up and the General said: "Ah, Dalrymple, I heard you were back. How are you?"

Robert carried his hand uncertainly to his forehead in the salute. "For God's sake give me water," he gasped. From his throat there came a whistling sound. One of the General's aides quickly drew his canteen and said: "Here, take this. I filled it with fresh water only a few moments ago."

"Look out for yourself," said the General, kindly. "I guess we've got them now. Do you need any help?"

"No, thank you, sir," replied Robert. The General waved his sabre and rode off, followed by his men.

As the fresh, cooling draught trickled down Robert's

throat and the parched burning was relieved by it, he remembered Rutherford, and running as fast as his trembling legs would carry him, tripping over the débris of the battle-strewn field and stumbling sometimes over stark forms, he hastened to him.

The wounded man had painfully drawn himself into a partially sitting position, but he looked more dead than alive. Robert ran to him, and kneeling said: "Forgive me for being gone so long. There was some hard fighting, and I was caught in the thick of it. Drink this." While he was speaking he held the canteen to Rutherford's lips, and when it fell from the fevered grasp of the man who drank not a drop remained. Rutherford's head fell back against the trunk of the tree and his eyes closed for an instant. When he opened them they were blurred. Pain and utter defeat had humbled his haughty spirit, and he gazed repentantly at the generous enemy who bent over him.

"You have saved my life," he said, "and I do not deserve it. I did all I could against you. I kept you from being exchanged while you were on the *Jersey*, and I had you arrested on the morning of the day after the fête. When we got to New York on this march I intended to have Cunningham lock you up. And you know why I did all of these things."

"Yes," said Robert.

"It's over now. I turned every trick I could against you, and you have won the game. I'm beaten, and I give up." His voice grew faint. Robert leaned nearer him. "Lie down," he said, gently. Rutherford weakly shook his head. After a moment he opened his eyes and with a pathetic, beaten look in them he said, in a scarcely audible tone: "She never loved me." His gaze shifted upwards through the foliage to the hot sky in a fixed and unutterable mournfulness. Pride had fallen away from him like a worn-out garment, and in that hour of travail that comes once in a lifetime to most of the sons of men his heart was laid bare to his conquering adversary. Robert was touched to the quick. With a deep impulse of compassion and sympathy he replied:

"At least you have loved a noble woman, and for that alone I will forgive you, even as I hope to be forgiven, for had I not been reminded of her at that last moment I should have been your murderer."

A strange, distorted smile wavered over Rutherford's pale features.

"We are even on that score," he said, with a trace of his old manner, "but for her sake I am glad that we are both here." He paused abruptly, cut short by a paroxysm of pain. They were not alone; the retreat of the British continued, and they were trying to draw off their wounded from the field.

"Can I do anything for you?" asked Robert.

"If you will, yes, and it will be the last favor I shall ever ask of you. I should like to go with our own men. My leg is getting rather bad. I've been here for some hours, you know, but so many others were worse off that I said to take them first."

"You shall go," said Robert. "I'll go and see General Wayne about it, but, man you're not done for."

"I don't mean that. I'm done with this war. I don't believe that you people are going to be subdued, and when I can get up I'll resign my commission and go back to England."

"Don't go!" cried Robert. "Stay here and find that we can be friends as well as enemies."

"I know that now," said Rutherford, "for I know you. But I couldn't stay here. There wouldn't be room for me if she were your wife, for I might as well tell you I'll never feel any different about her. She's the only woman I ever loved. Will you give her my parting message?"

"Yes, gladly."

"Tell her that it is for her sake that I lay down my arms against her countrymen. If you win I'll say you deserve it."

"Rutherford!" cried Robert, "I wish to God we

had never been enemies! It isn't too late now. It has all been a miserable business. Let's begin at the beginning again."

"I'm beginning again all right," said Rutherford, grimly, "and so are you, but it doesn't mean that we'll begin together. Our paths are as widely separated as the poles. Try to think of me as kindly as you can, and as for me I'll never forget you—or her."

As he finished speaking a small party of British approached, carrying a pole with a white handkerchief tied to the top. The order to cease firing had been given by Wayne, and a Continental Captain accompanied the field officer and several privates.

"Good-bye," said Rutherford. Robert held out his hand and took that of the wounded man in it in a clasp that meant more than many words. They looked steadily into each other's eyes. "You will tell her?" whispered Rutherford. "I will tell her," replied Robert. Their hands fell apart.

"Lift him carefully, boys," said the Captain. "There's a wagon about a mile away, sir, and then we can take care of you."

Four privates lifted Rutherford skilfully, and the little party started down towards the defile. Robert stood staring after them in a daze. He felt a touch on his shoulder and turning saw Tallmadge.

"Rob!" he cried, "where have you been all day? Are you hurt?"

"No," replied Robert. "I've just exchanged one of His Majesty's officers for this." He drew out the little knot of lace and ribbon, and Tallmadge understood.

CHAPTER XXV

With *Our* Army

TWO days after the battle Clinton's army was encamped in and about New York, and Peter and his household were once more established in their home. The Thorntons came with them, accepting the hospitality urged upon them by Peter and thankful to rest after the journey.

Again Elizabeth could obtain no word about Robert, and her anxiety and apprehension were rendered more acute by Alice's approaching happiness. The wedding day of herself and Captain Barrington had been fixed for the tenth of July, and Mrs. Fitzmorris insisted that it should not be delayed, but should take place on the appointed date, and with but little discussion it was so arranged. Barrington was to be stationed on Long Island, and after the wedding all were to go over there for the summer, the young bride to be with her husband, and Peter's family and Mrs. Thornton were to go with Mrs. Fitzmorris in her country house in Flatbush. A turmoil of preparation immediately filled the house, for in the hurried departure from Philadelphia much of Alice's trousseau had been

left behind, and part had been lost en route, so that she was sadly shorn of feminine fripperies. There was now no time to be lost, and a seamstress was engaged, two maids pressed into service and the girls themselves had recourse to the needle. Informal invitations were sent out to a small number of the Philadelphia friends of the Thorntons, and the arrangements were made apace.

"Oh, if it could only be a double wedding," sighed Alice, as they sat sewing in Elizabeth's room one morning. "What a pity it can't be. It's so romantic about you and Colonel Rutherford."

"Romantic!" echoed Elizabeth. "Oh, Alice, you are so happy you cannot understand how I feel. I have no time to waste in romance when my heart is breaking because I cannot hear whether Robert is dead or alive. If you were not here I do not know how I could endure it, for I have no sympathy from any one. Imagine how you would feel if Captain Barrington had disappeared after the battle, and you could get no tidings from him, with not a single member of your family to give you one kind word."

Her self-control gave way. The sharp and conflicting emotions of weeks had worn even on her steady nerves, and now, with the ever present reminder of happiness before her eyes in Alice's innocent joy, a deep melancholy had been growing for days. She

dropped the delicate garment on which she had been sewing into her lap, and burst into a violent fit of sobbing. Alice threw down her work and flew to her.

"Oh, forgive me!" she cried. "Bess, Bess, don't cry. Oh, what have I done!" She gathered Elizabeth in her arms and kissed and soothed her with all the affectionate wiles of a warm hearted girl. Elizabeth wept unrestrained on her shoulder, and the tears were as grateful to her as rain on the parched grass. When the gust had spent itself she raised her head and smiled through the last tears.

"I'm better, Alice, dear. Don't worry about me. I didn't think I'd give way, and I won't again. It's all over now." She sighed, the long and trembling sigh that marked the passing of the storm, and pressed her cheek against Alice's. "I am so thankful you are here," she said. "Uncle Peter will not let any of my girl friends who are with the other side enter the house since we came back, not even Nellie Musgrove, so I can't have her here for the wedding, though Julia carries notes between us."

"It is cruel," said Alice, hotly.

"It isn't kind, but it's what I've had to endure for two years, though it will be worse now, for Uncle Peter is so furious because the army had to leave Philadelphia. I am glad we are going over to Long Island where I can see you sometimes."

"Bess," said Alice, earnestly, "Maurice is so generous and kind-hearted, and I know we can depend on him to get some word for you. I'll write to him about it this very night."

"It's good of you, dear, but it's more than a week since the battle now, and I'm getting discouraged. I have two or three friends who will let me know the minute they hear anything, and all I can do is just to keep on hoping. Uncle Peter can forbid my friends to come to the house, but as long as I have Julia I can get letters and messages." Her tears had gone. Her cheeks were as bright as roses emerging from a heavy dew. She sat up straight and lifted her head with a characteristic motion. Alice seemed to be suddenly possessed with a new idea.

"Bess," she said, "I'm sure you'll run off with him yet."

Elizabeth laughed. "You goose! Haven't I run off once? Of course I will as soon as I have the chance. I'd do it if for nothing else than to get even with Aunt Eliza for twitting me about it. You know I told you about that spoiled elopement of hers when she was a girl, and she never forgave me for finding out and daring to mention it to her. She has managed to make some allusion to it every day since, and intimates that poor Robert is a desperate character."

"What an old hyena she is! Bess, if I ever can do anything for you I'll be only too glad. If she were my ——"

"Come in, aunt," called Elizabeth, sweetly, to the figure that appeared in the doorway. "We were just speaking of you. Now, isn't that embroidery really as good as yours?" She lifted the dainty chemise and held it before her aunt's eyes with an air of challenge. Mrs. Fitzmorris examined it closely, with a critical air.

"You have certainly improved, my dear. This leaf is a little rough, and the vine seems a trifle out of proportion, but you have done quite well."

"I'm so glad the lovely set you gave me was saved," said Alice. "I haven't anything prettier."

"Aunt Eliza's embroidery is something too perfect for any use," said Elizabeth. "Remember you are to give me a set just like Alice's when I am married." Mrs. Fitzmorris looked suspiciously at her niece, but Elizabeth met her gaze with an engaging frankness which for once disarmed the elder lady, and she made no reply to her, but turning to Alice said, significantly: "I'm very glad that your wedding wasn't postponed, my dear. It's such bad luck." Having made her stab she departed.

"I think I'll make auntie a set done in poison ivy," said Elizabeth.

The ten days before the wedding sped quickly. Barrington had not been in town at all, and arrived to make an early morning call on the day of the ceremony, which was set for high noon. Early as he was he had a companion, Paul Elliott, who after informing Peter that his father could not come, asked for Elizabeth, and while Barrington had a last lover's interview with Alice, Paul and Elizabeth went out into the garden.

"Bess," said the boy, abruptly, "I'm here virtually under false colors, and I wouldn't be here at all if it were not for the sake of seeing you once more." He stopped. On his brow great drops of perspiration showed his agitation.

"Of seeing me once more!" repeated Elizabeth, surprised. "What do you mean, Paul?"

"Bess," he replied, "I will tell you only on your solemn promise that you will keep it secret. It is as much to your interest as mine, but you are not to tell a word of it, not even to Alice."

"Paul, I promise," she cried, catching his hand. "Oh, do not keep me waiting; what is it?"

"This—to-morrow I shall be a private in the Continental army. My father has disinherited me and ordered me from the house. Here in my pocket I have his letter to Peter, telling him all, but I shall not give it to him until after the ceremony. The gov-

ernor has taken it very hard, and I'm sorry, but I can't help it."

"Paul, oh, Paul! With the army—*our* army!"

"Yes, *our* army; I'm with them, heart and soul. I'd have gone long ago, but dad and I like each other, and I wouldn't break away till I really couldn't stand it any longer. We had a time of it last evening, and had it all out. The old man's done with me. God knows when I'll see him again."

He had turned very pale; his boyish face was drawn, and his eyes saw through a mist. The reflex action of excitement and the exhaustion following a sleepless night had caught him at the lowest point of resistance, and he looked as if he were about to swoon. Elizabeth was alarmed.

"Paul!" she cried. "Oh, how white you are! You must have a cup of coffee at once." She started to rise, but he pulled her down.

"I'm all right. Stay here with me. This is the only chance we'll have to talk. I hate the gabble there'll be after awhile, and I came early on purpose to see you alone. I was in the saddle most of the night, as I couldn't sleep, but I'll be all right when I've braced up for the show at noon. But guess the rest of the news, Bess. You haven't begun to be interested yet."

She caught her breath sharply. "Do you mean ——?" She could not finish.

"I shall be a private in Company K, Captain Dalrymple, of Colonel Tallmadge's regiment, stationed at —Bess, for heaven's sake, don't faint here! Good Lord!" He gripped her hands until she cried out with the pain, and then she moaned a little, but it was a moan of relief.

"Oh, he is alive!"

"Yes, alive and well. Not a thing the matter with him. Distinguished himself at the battle, and got his Captain's commission at once, thanks to the Chief, who took the matter up personally. I think it's been pending ever since the battle of Long Island, but anyway he asked for active field service and was assigned to Tallmadge's infantry, a new regiment of enlisted men, chiefly from New York, and they're in camp over at New Brunswick at present, but the whole army is moving, and I received word yesterday that it is the intention of General Washington to go into camp at White Plains. When I leave the house today I shall go direct to the troops. Had you heard nothing?"

"Not a word. Even Alice heard nothing through Captain Barrington."

"Oh, he's had other matters on his mind. But I haven't told you everything yet."

"I'm prepared for anything now."

"Well, I'm sure you can stand this, for it's only

secondary. Colonel Rutherford was wounded, pretty badly, and he's been laid up ever since. A day or two ago I heard that he was being cared for at the house of some of his friends over on Long Island. He may be your nearest neighbor when you move."

"Oh, will I *never* see the last of that man. I'm sorry if he's hurt, but I cannot endure the thought of seeing him again."

"Very likely you won't. Hope for the best. He may recover and be gone by the time you get over."

"I hope so. But, Paul, now you will be with Robert, and you can take him a letter from me. Oh, I must go right away."

"Bess, of course I'll take any letter or message, or both. But what's the use of dilly-dallying any longer? You've got to take about so many chances anyway, and there isn't the slightest shadow of a possibility that your people will ever give in about him, and, honestly, I think a plan will have to be fixed up, and you'll just have to take them all by surprise. You wouldn't mind running off, would you?"

"Oh, joy! *Do* you think it could be managed?"

"I'm sure of it. I know every inch of ground on Long Island, and I can help you out now. It would be an easy matter to cross over from Jersey some night with a party, make a quick dash and be off."

"Paul, how delightful! But no accident this time."

"No; we'll fix that. After all that's happened to you and Robert I think you deserve a run of luck. And it will serve the others right, too."

"Oh, won't Aunt Eliza have conniptions! And Uncle Peter! How he will swear!"

"It will be worth hearing. Now, listen, Bess." He gave her a rapid outline of the general plan that would be followed, everything of the details to depend on future developments and the exigencies of the moment, cautioning her on no account to give the slightest hint to Alice or to Julia, but merely to be prepared to do exactly as she was told in a letter that would reach her from Robert later.

"I will do all—all! Oh, Paul, I don't know whether I'm good any more or not, but I just want to get away. Oh, it will be heavenly to be free. I'm so tired of being watched all the time."

"Well, Bess, I've got to go this minute and get into some other clothes."

"Yes, and I must fly! I'm Alice's only bridesmaid, you know, and I have a lot of blue ribbon knots to make yet."

"Imagine if Barrington knew, or Peter! Whew! I must get out of the house before Peter reads the governor's letter. Write and tell me about it."

Elizabeth flew up to her room. It was growing late in the morning, and Mrs. Fitzmorris and Mrs.

Hardy were inquiring as to her absence. Her glowing cheeks and brilliant eyes made both women look at her in amazement.

"There is something strange about it," Mrs. Fitzmorris confided to her relative, in her dressing-room. "She was down in the garden with Paul for over an hour, and she looks excited."

"Oh, they were talking about something," said Mrs. Hardy, indifferently.

"Amanda, you talk like a fool. Of course they were talking about something. I'd like to know what it was."

"Ask her."

"She isn't like she used to be. Elizabeth never could hide anything from me until lately, but she's changed, and the strange part of it is I have never been able to catch her in a falsehood."

"Give her time, Eliza. I must say she is different since she has been so much under your tutelage."

"If she had not been spoiled I might have done something with her. Between you and Peter the girl's prospects have been ruined."

"I left it all to Peter, and he told me that you interfered with him a good deal. Jane, don't lace me any tighter."

In Elizabeth's room the two girls were in each

other's arms for a brief and excited conference. Barrington had brought word of Rutherford's wound and of Robert's safety, and this time it was Alice who almost wept from joy at the good news brought to her friend. Elizabeth, quivering in every nerve, with excitement, yet with a hidden ecstasy, calmed Alice and bade her return to her room and prepare for the final coming of the bridegroom. They separated, and Elizabeth snatched the next few minutes to write to Robert, while Julia impatiently waited in the next room, lost in astonishment at her mistress's actions. Never was a girl dressed more quickly than was Elizabeth that morning, yet as she stood before the glass and surveyed herself, when Julia had given the final touches, she knew that she had never looked better. Her heart was beating against the letter which she would give to Paul, and a brief pang shot through her—— Oh, why was *he* not there to see her! She was dressed in white, his favorite, and a garland of pale pink roses rested in a coronal on her dark hair; her great gray eyes glowed with her suppressed emotion, and lips and brow defined a face of melting womanly tenderness. Ah, so would she look some day for him! The vision of her thoughts overwhelmed her and she drew back, from her own reflection, as a wave of crimson dyed her so deeply that it showed under the thin bodice that veiled her neck

and shoulders. Already she had been called twice to come to Alice, but she dared not go while such emotion surged through her. Panting for breath she leaned against a chair, caught in a flood that shook her from head to foot. To be a bride! To be his wife! At last the meaning rushed over her. While she stood thus, knowing that she had scarcely a moment of time left for her privacy, her eye fell on the little vellum Testament on her bureau, and the gilt crucifix stood out in a ray of sunlight that fell across it. With a deep indrawing of her breath that was like a sob she fell on her knees by her bed and burying her face in the white coverings she prayed in passionate pleadings that poured from every throb of her heart.

When she rose the excess of color had ebbed from her face, and a soft, gentle expression had settled on her features. With a sweet, virginal calmness she preceded Alice to the flower decked altar in the drawing-room and heard the words of the marriage service as though in a dream. Alice was pale but self-possessed, and the pair made a handsome couple as they stood before the Bishop. The best man was a total stranger to Elizabeth, a Captain in his regiment, and both the groom and his attendant were in uniform, at Alice's especial request.

The breakfast was very gay. Elizabeth did not

know many of the guests, and the diversion of the hour was more complete than it would otherwise have been. When the bride's cake was cut she drew the ring, and the merry jest went around: "You will be the next bride!" They lifted their glasses to her, and she caught Paul's eyes fixed on her with deep meaning as he drank his toast.

The company gathered in the wide hall to speed the young couple with rice and old shoes, and Alice, descending the stairway in her traveling gown, gave a warm parting embrace to Elizabeth. "I'll see you soon," she said. "Good-bye, dear."

Paul, standing by Elizabeth, affected to weep, and when the girls separated he boldly put his arm about the maid of honor and gave her a resounding kiss full on the lips. An uproar of mirth greeted his daring, but while he rubbed his ears where Elizabeth boxed him soundly, he said under cover of the laughter: "I have the right to, Bess. You know I had a narrow escape from having you for my stepmother."

Half an hour later the storm broke. The bride and groom and the guests were gone, and Peter had read 'Squire Elliott's letter. Nothing else was talked of for the rest of the day. Elizabeth had fled to her room. With Alice gone she was utterly disconsolate for a companion. Peter had broken out in a fit of rage when the truth dawned upon him, and he had

bitterly denounced Paul and expressed a wish that he had known it earlier so that he might have had him taken into custody. Mrs. Fitzmorris was in a fury, but gave another interpretation to the matter.

"I knew there was something the matter this morning when she stayed with him so long in the garden. I think there's a love affair between them."

"Eliza, have you lost your senses?" inquired Peter. "Didn't you see him kiss her before everybody? If he were in love with her do you think he would do that?"

"There is something between them," insisted Mrs. Fitzmorris. "Mark my words, there is something that is hidden."

"Hidden! They both have enough to hide. A couple of renegades. The devil take it, there's treason in every household."

Elizabeth kept her room and let the excitement rage. She had half expected to be called down and questioned, but greatly to her joy she was left undisturbed. Julia brought her supper up to her and reported that she was not asked for. Elizabeth marveled, but she was so thankful to be left in peace that she dismissed it from her mind, and gave herself up to dreams of the future. Long she sat by her window and watched the gorgeous sunset, and then, languid with the excitement of the day, she fell

asleep. A few days later they left for Flatbush, under an escort and traveling cautiously under permits within the lines. The entire household went over, save Mrs. Hardy, who remained behind to care for the house with several servants. No one had mentioned Paul's name to Elizabeth since the day of the wedding, but there was a strange coldness in the manner of both Peter and Mrs. Fitzmorris, and she was made to feel that she was under the ban. They had been established on Long Island less than a week when she learned that Rutherford was in the neighborhood, slowly convalescing from his wounds, and that Robert's family were with friends, about ten miles out in the country.

CHAPTER XXVI

Drive On!

WITH their change of residence life began to run more smoothly. The British were quartered in almost every fine residence in Flatbush that had formerly been occupied by their rebel owners, and the beautiful country estates saw a round of social gayeties in unbroken succession. Week-end parties were the rule, and the uninvited temporary proprietors dispensed a lavish hospitality after the fashion of merry England that was deeply gratifying to themselves and their guests, and despite the fact that they saw their own fleet blockaded in New York harbor they ignored it so far as daily enjoyment was concerned.

"'Tis a plague," said Peter, "to think of that rabble Congress sitting in Philadelphia, and a French fleet anchored at the mouth of the Delaware, but as long as we hold New York and Staten and Long Islands we have the key to the situation."

"Yes, practically," assented Barrington, "but there are many of the Continental families left in all of these places, enough to give us some trouble perhaps."

Peter gave him a searching look. "I notice that in speaking of the rebels you frequently use the name they have chosen themselves."

"My dear sir," said Barrington, "most of the officers have fallen into that habit. You see they have been recognized in several foreign courts."

Peter growled deeply in his throat. "They're rebels to me to the end of the game," he said.

Alice and Elizabeth were together almost constantly; they rode, drove, and visited at the same houses and all but monopolized the attentions of the leading officers, Alice being fêted as a bride, and Elizabeth as the most beautiful and attractive girl in the little colony. Mrs. Fitzmorris and Mrs. Thornton were in their element, and Peter, as the host of his own dinners and week-end parties, recovered his old bland and genial manner and was once more the delightful Peter of old. It was speedily known to all the household that Rutherford was convalescing at the elegant mansion of the Axtells, one of the most extensive and beautiful estates on Long Island, the house one of the large and stately country houses of the day, richly furnished and equipped with an unusually large retinue of servants, while the spacious grounds were carefully laid out and cultivated in lawns, gardens and walks. Mrs. Axtell drove over to call on Mrs. Fitzmorris and Mrs. Thornton, and the three women

had an extended conference. Elizabeth was out on horseback with Alice, and when she returned was given Mrs. Axtell's compliments without comment, but at the supper table that same evening Mrs. Fitzmorris significantly remarked that Colonel Rutherford was rapidly improving, and that as soon as he was well enough Mrs. Axtell was to give a lawn fête, which they were all expected to attend. As usual several guests were present, and in the interchange of sympathetic interest in the popular officer's health the silence of Elizabeth passed apparently unnoticed.

But the whole story of the episode on the field at Monmouth was public property. Rutherford himself had told it, had openly complimented Robert to many, and had frankly stated that he owed his life to him. The more delicate personal point involved he confided privately to Peter and one or two others, including his hostess, and avowed his determination to resign his commission and return to England as soon as he should be able. On the morning after Mrs. Axtell's call Peter rode over to see him, and was gone most of the day. When he came in he seemed dejected and had a long talk with Mrs. Fitzmorris, but neither one mentioned the subject to Elizabeth. To all outward appearance the matter was tabooed, but though Peter's manner to the girl was gentle and affectionate

again he seemed to be brooding, and Mrs. Fitzmorris, thoroughly outraged at the unexpected turn of affairs, lost no opportunity to hurt Elizabeth in every possible way. The course of the social round brought her face to face with various commenting hints, some congratulatory, several envious. Everywhere she went she was pointed out as the heroine of the most romantic episode of any girl on the island, and young subalterns vied with one another in lavish attentions. A meeting with Rutherford came unexpectedly. She was riding with Alice one morning when a turn in the road brought them sharply up against the Axtell carriage. Rutherford was sitting upright among a pile of cushions, his hostess by his side, and though very pale he was beginning to recover his former looks and bearing. Mrs. Axtell called to the coachman to halt, and the entire party stopped.

Rutherford took off his hat and greeted the girls with perfect self-possession, and Alice promptly offered sincere congratulations on his improvement. Despite all that had happened Elizabeth felt a throb of pity for him, and the knowledge that he had so generously renounced her filled her with a glow of admiration far beyond any sentiment she had ever felt for him during all his pursuit. Her eyes softened and met his with frank and tender sweetness, as she held out her hand and said :

"Colonel Rutherford, it gives me great pleasure to ee that you are able to be out again."

Only Rutherford knew what it cost him not to press her hand in the old way, but he restrained himself with a new sense of self-control in which he had lately schooled himself, and said: "Thank you, Miss Windham. I am very happy to be about once more. I had the good fortune to escape a close call." He looked her squarely in the eyes, and Elizabeth felt a warm wave sweep over her, but before she could speak Mrs. Axtell said:

"We are going to take very good care of him and keep him with us. I hope you have no other engagement for the night of my fête next week. I shall count on you confidently."

"Alice," said Elizabeth, as the girls rode on, "how glad I am we met him. I had almost dreaded it, but it makes me happy to know that he has acknowledged Robert's goodness. It is noble of him."

"Colonel Rutherford is a gentleman," replied Alice. "He told Maurice that he could never repay his debt to Robert and that he would never trouble you again."

As the carriage rolled off, Mrs. Axtell said: "Colonel, I don't blame you for falling in love with her. She is a lovely girl, but you are foolish to give her up. Gratitude is next door to love, and you can win her now."

"My dear madam," replied Rutherford, "the gratitude which Miss Windham feels towards me is but the natural rebound of a heart that has chosen its own mate and will have no other. She has taught me what love is, and I have given her up because I know now what it means myself. It is fate, and I must accept it."

Mrs. Axtell flushed a little. "What!" she laughed, "has the most dashing officer in the service turned philosopher! Or is this the courage of despair?"

"A little of both perhaps," said Rutherford, grimly. "I need more than the consolations of religion."

Two days later Peter had his hopes dashed. Mrs. Fitzmorris, opening a letter from Mrs. Hardy in the breakfast room, read to herself until suddenly she became amused and laughed with evident enjoyment.

"Tell us the good news, Eliza, and let us smile with you," said Peter.

"With pleasure," replied Mrs. Fitzmorris. "I'm sure you'll enjoy it, Peter; listen to this: 'Mrs. Earle was married yesterday to Dudley Leigh, and they have gone to housekeeping at once, in the most approved Darby and Joan manner. I am quite certain that Peter had sampled her cooking on several occasions, though he never would admit it. Break the news to him gently, as I fear he will grieve over his lost little dinner parties a deux.' I hate to be abrupt,

Peter, but you know you insisted." Her relish was keen. It was the sort of thing that was meat and drink to her.

Peter met the issue squarely. He had long since known that the liking he had cherished for the buxom little widow was useless, but though he had persuaded himself that he was steeled against the news, he got a little shock. But Eliza Fitzmorris was not given the satisfaction of seeing him wince. He went down with flying colors.

"Mrs. Earle, ah—Mrs. Leigh, is really quite the best cook I ever knew. Amanda forgets that I have praised her repeatedly. Really, she can prepare a squab in the most perfect manner. I knew some time since that she was to marry Mr. Leigh. From what I know of him I believe she has made an excellent choice."

Mrs. Fitzmorris nearly fainted. Elizabeth, so delighted that she was on the point of shouting, collected herself with difficulty, and said: "She's an awfully nice little woman. Everybody likes her. Half a dozen men from Captain Barrington's company boarded with her last winter, and he told me she was immensely popular with all of them, and that they adored her cooking. She must have served some of the squabs to Uncle Peter that they gave her sometimes as a token of their appreciation."

Peter had never felt more grateful in his life. Eliza was duly routed, and he was overjoyed to see her sit in helpless silence, but he was puzzled to know how Elizabeth could have hit on the solution of the squabs, and after breakfast he asked her point blank.

"Oh, Uncle Peter," she said, bubbling and dimpling, "don't you know I'm a spy, a *real* spy?"

The witchery of her mirth infected Peter. His own mercurial spirits rose with a bound. "You're not the real thing," he said. "I gave her some of those squabs myself."

"I dare you to tell Aunt Eliza," said Elizabeth. Then she threw both arms about his neck, kissed him heartily, and saying: "Oh, you dear uncle!" ran from the room. Peter walked to the window and stood looking out on the broad terraced lawn for some minutes. A servant came up and said: "Letters for you, sir," and he took them without turning around. And then, directly on the address of the topmost letter, there fell two great tears, for Peter Simpson's affectionate heart was sorely torn within him. He was bitterly disappointed at Rutherford's change of position, and his pride and intense devotion to the British cause forbade him to consent to Elizabeth's marriage with Robert. Still, the situation seemed no longer to be within his firm grasp. Rutherford had advised him to consent to the match, and Mrs. Fitz-

morris bitterly opposed it. He hated Robert and the cause he espoused, and he loved Elizabeth, and thus he vibrated between the devil and the deep sea. He sighed and opened the letters.

As the days passed and no word came from Robert, Elizabeth's tension increased. Then one morning she was surprised when she wakened to find Julia by her bed, closely watching her. As she opened her eyes the maid caught her hand and said, excitedly: "Oh, Miss Bess, I done been waitin' for yo' to wake up fo' an hour. That Adolph, over at 'Squire Van Dusen's, come over hyah at midnight las' night, and tole me he got word to go an' get a letter fo' you dis evening, an' dat it will have important word fo' you."

"A letter! Julia? Where is he to get it?"

"I doan know, Miss Bess. But I got to go away early dis afternoon to get it from him."

"Julia, be very careful to-day. Keep out of the way of Mrs. Fitzmorris as much as possible, and be sure no one sees you when you leave the house. I know what kind of word will be in the letter, and you are to know later."

Elizabeth passed the day in a state of feverish expectation. She locked the door of her room, thereby agitating Mrs. Fitzmorris, who was fond of coming in unannounced, and carefully inspected her wardrobe,

selecting a few garments which she removed to another closet. Alice arrived just as she had finished and said:

"I see you're going over your clothes too. I've just been through mine. I need a lot of new things. I haven't yet replaced what I lost when we left Philadelphia. What are you going to wear to the fête? The invitations are out for next Thursday."

"I don't know. It will depend on——" she paused. Her secret had nearly escaped her.

"On what? Oh, the weather! It will be too bad if it rains, but if it does Mrs. Axtell has arranged to have everything removed indoors and have tableaux instead, so it really won't make any difference. Wear white, Bess. You look your best in that."

"I think I will." She felt the color in her cheeks, and rising hastily said: "Help me to decide, Alice. I'll get them all out, and see which you like the best."

Half an hour later when Alice left the gown had been selected, and it was agreed that Elizabeth and Julia should call for Alice and her husband on their way to the Axtells' and take them with her.

"I may not see you again before Thursday," said Alice, "unless you run over to-morrow, but you'll be sure to call early that evening, won't you?"

"I'm going to leave in good time," said Elizabeth. "I'll be there promptly unless I am absolutely prevented, and it will take more than rain to keep me home."

Julia left on her errand about four in the afternoon, and from that time to ten in the evening when she returned Elizabeth was under the pressure of her own thoughts and the necessity of concealing the maid's absence from being known. Early in the evening she escaped to her room under plea of a headache, saying that she wished to retire soon, and in the solitude of her apartment she gave herself up to conflicting emotions of hope, fear and anxiety that sent her pacing restlessly up and down the room. At last, sinking by the window, she leaned far out and inhaled the sweet night air in deep draughts that brought some tranquillity to her. Within the room there was only a faint, subdued light from two carefully shaded wax tapers on the bureau, and without was the still, dark fragrance of a midsummer's night. Pungent earth odors rose to her nostrils, and the glow of fireflies and the singing of katydids fell on her senses with familiar and quieting insistence. Insensibly the turmoil of her mind was calmed, and a peace crept over her, as a mysterious telepathy whispered that all would be well. Fully relaxed in the inward grateful assurance, she fell into a deep reverie,

and the wings of her imagination had taken such flight that she did not hear Julia enter and approach her.

She sprang up quickly, took the letter and flew to the candles, the dear handwriting filling her with passionate joy, but when she had broken the seal her excitement was so great that the words danced before her at first so that she could scarcely read the message. It was short and definite. She was to meet Robert on the next Thursday evening at the old abandoned church a mile from the highway on the road to New Utrecht. He would be there with Tallmadge, Paul Elliott and an escort of picked men. "Take the wood road and get there as soon after eight o'clock as possible. Let nothing stop you, as every detail has been carefully arranged, and I may not be able to get over from the Jersey shore again for some time."

"Ah, my intuition was right," she said, aloud. "I felt that it would be set for Thursday evening. So much the better. Julia," to the gaping girl, "I'm going to tell you what you are to do, and if you fail me I'll have you shot."

But Julia did not need the threat. At midnight she left her mistress, and the garments which Elizabeth had chosen were conveniently packed. Nothing of especial interest happened before Thursday. Eliza-

beth purposely avoided seeing Alice, and devoted herself to a prudent demeanor before Mrs. Fitzmorris. With Peter she was more than usually affectionate, and he was more like his old self than he had been for months. Thursday dawned in a turquoise vault, without a hint of rain. Late in the afternoon Elizabeth wrote a brief note to Peter, and the last loving words in it were blotted with her tears. She dried them as she wrote the postscript: "Give my love to Aunt Eliza, and tell her I shall expect her to send me that set."

"This isn't the kind of dress I ought to wear, Julia," she said, as that faithful tiring maid robed her that evening, "but I can scarcely wear a riding habit to a lawn fête. It might attract attention. People are so foolish. I can finish dressing myself after you fasten my bodice. Go down-stairs and let me know when Uncle Peter leaves the library so that I can leave the note for him."

Not the slightest suspicion attached to her departure. It was not yet dusk. The coachman was Sam, an old retainer of Mrs. Fitzmorris' Philadelphia servants, and that lady's last words to Elizabeth were: "Tell them that we'll be there within the hour."

"All right, auntie. We won't wait for you, shall we?"

"Wait! Of course not. What in the world do you want to wait for?"

"Oh, *I* don't want to particularly, but I thought perhaps you might miss something if you didn't come early."

"Not that I know of. The fireworks are not to be set off till late."

Peter accompanied her to the coach, and Elizabeth would have given him a parting salute if she had dared. When they were safely out of the grounds she settled herself comfortably. "The fireworks will be set off so much earlier than auntie thinks, won't they, Julia?"

Sam's astonishment verged on revolt when he was ordered to turn off of the main road and take the wood road instead. In bewildered amazement the darky protested that they could not reach the Barringtons' that way, and Elizabeth was compelled to cut off his expostulations sharply. With a final grumbled protest the bewildered negro whipped up the horses, and they started off briskly. They now had less than a mile to go, and Elizabeth, relapsing into a keen anxiety concerning Sam's unwilling obedience and fearful that she might not be able to get him to go the rest of the way, signed to Julia to keep up a stream of small talk with her to allay his suspicions. As they came in sight of the ruins of the

old church—it had been burned early in the Revolution—Sam's rebellion became complete, and turning on his seat he flatly refused to go a step further.

"Drive on!" cried Elizabeth, imperiously. They were less than a quarter of a mile away, and she was quivering with excitement.

"'Deed, Miss Bess, I doan go no further on dis yere road. Dere's something up, an' I'se gwine drive yo' straight back to Miss Eliza." He had reined in the horses, and they were standing in the middle of the road, but as he made a motion to turn the carriage Elizabeth picked up her skirts, stepped over the seat and taking the reins touched the team with the whip and they flew forward.

The darky cried out angrily and attempted to snatch the ribbons, but before he could do so Julia grasped him about the neck with two strong arms and dragged him, choking, backward. With his heels in the air and his eyes protruding from the tight grip on his windpipe, he gave vent to half inarticulate imprecations and threats, mingled with appeals for air. His cries were in vain. "You good fo' nothing nigger!" cried Julia, "I reckon you doan play no mo' tricks on me. You 'member you tell Pete the other day that you could be my sweetheart ef yo' wanted to! That Adolph'll brek every bone in yo' carcass yet fo' dat." She shook him. Sam

was not comfortable. His head was jammed between his shoulders, and his right leg was elevated above his left. Also, Julia was unkind. Chloe was really better looking. He tried to shriek. Elizabeth whipped up the horses. Sam got lower down in the coach, then, twisting and squirming, he partially released himself, and was reaching for Julia with anything but pacific intent. Too late. They had reached the church. A bevy of men swarmed out of the blackness of the shadows and a stern voice cried: "Halt!"

"Robert!" shrieked Elizabeth.

"Hello!" cried Tallmadge's cheery voice. "What have you got here?" He lifted Sam bodily from the coach, and handed him over to two men. Robert was assisting Elizabeth to alight, when a warm hand grasped hers.

"Bess!" cried a familiar voice. "Good for you. I knew you'd get here!"

"Paul! You here!"

"Of course. What did I tell you?"

"Bess," said Robert. "Thank heaven! Are you hurt?"

"No; Sam got obstreperous, that's all. Julia took care of him."

"Well, we'll take care of both of you now. What have you done with him, Ben?"

"He's ahead, under guard, gagged and bound. Get in there, Rob, and be quick about it. Paul will drive to New Utrecht."

Robert got into the coach, with Elizabeth by his side. Julia sat opposite.

CHAPTER XXVII

It Was Worth It

"DON'T lose a minute," said Tallmadge. "We must be off instantly."

"All right, Colonel," replied Robert, "you are in command of this expedition, and we hold you responsible. Go ahead."

"Close in! Forward, march!" Came the firm command. "Silence in the ranks."

"That doesn't mean us," said Robert. "We're all right now."

The small cavalcade moved off at a brisk pace. The unhappy Sam was ahead. Tallmadge rode just behind attended by a lieutenant and three men. The others followed in the rear. Under Tallmadge's directions the horses were urged almost to a gallop for half a mile or so, and then they turned into the old and almost unused road, which, being rougher than the other, compelled a slower gait.

"This way is about a mile longer," said Robert, "but we are taking it for safety. Bess, heavens! but you look sweet to-night!"

"Don't, Rob. Julia will see you."

"She was looking the other way, besides she might as well get used to it. I don't care who sees me." He took another one, and this time Julia's observation was evident. "You don't have to fall out on that side, Julia. There's just as much room on the other."

"Fo' Gawd, Marse Robert, I'se so glad I reckon I could fall out of both sides at once. You an' Miss Bess needn't mind me no more'n ef I was a dead 'possum."

"I think you're something of a 'possum, Julia, but I'm sure you're not a dead one. If you should happen to see me kissing anybody you might learn something for Adolph's benefit."

In the clear half light the girl's white teeth gleamed and her eyes rolled as she said in her most melodious tones: "'Deed, Marse Robert, that Adolph done know how to do his own kissing long ago, an' he learn me mighty well. But I reckon I might as well tell you now as any time, that nigger gwine to come after me jus' as soon as he can get away, an' I reckon you an' Miss Bess need a coachman."

The peals of laughter that came from the carriage caused Tallmadge to look around. "Upon my soul!" gasped Robert, when he could speak. "Bess, have you worked up this scheme?"

"No; but I'm willing to abet it. Oh, Julia, how can I ever trust you again!"

"She's had a fine example in you. We'll manage to find something for Adolph, Julia, though we may not set up a carriage at once. Do you care, Bess?"

"How could I care for that! Anything will do for us, so we are together. Robert, tell me how you got here. I'm dying to know."

"It's too long to tell just now. We crossed in a boat with muffled oars, and it's easy to get in between pickets if you know how, and Paul's services were invaluable. Sometimes it isn't so easy to get out again. I hope nothing will happen, but if it does I don't want you to be frightened. We have eleven men, enough to cover an escape. I don't think we'll be caught before we get to New Utrecht, and it's only three miles to the ferry."

"I never felt so safe in my life. How are we to get to the ferry?"

"On horseback. The horses are waiting for us. We will make Peter a present of his carriage and pair. I must say they go handsomely. By the way, do you know who is leading my horse in the rear?"

"I have not the slightest idea."

"His name is Vawter. He is the young fellow who brought you my letter from the *Jersey* on that Christmas Eve. Do you remember?"

She gave a little cry, and did not answer him in words. In the fast-gathering darkness he drew her

close to him, so close that he felt her heart beating against his breast, and they swung into depths of happiness together. They were traveling at a rattling pace now, for the road was more open, and the rumbling of the wheels and the steady rhythm of the horses' hoofs as they trotted before and after them, alone broke the stillness. At last fortune was smiling on them, and even the danger of the hour exhilarated both of them as their hearts strained towards their mutual desire. The stars were out, and the warm summer night was so clear that it was not dark, and every object could be plainly discerned. The soft thud of the hoofs in the damp grass by the roadside was like music to Robert. He held Elizabeth yet closer to him and buried his face in her neck. "They cannot go fast enough," he whispered, passionately.

For reply she laid her lips on his, and they kept silence again for awhile, and then Elizabeth drew gently away and said: "Tell me, dear, at whose house will we be, and who are to be there? You see, I know nothing."

"Oh, they're mere details, of no particular importance, at least nothing except that my mother will be there, and my little sister, Belle. She has been coached for the event, and you are to have a bridesmaid. She's just five years old, and as pretty as a peach. Mother brought her because she didn't want

to leave her behind. They have come over from Flatbush with an escort, and will go back in the morning. We will be at the house of old friends of ours, the Hollisters. The rector is there and everything in perfect readiness. There is to be absolutely no delay. We will be married within fifteen minutes after we enter the house, and we will leave immediately after the ceremony and ride like the deuce to the ferry. Tallmadge will stand up with me. There isn't a frill in sight, Bess. It's just a plain case of getting spliced and making a quick run before we're caught. We won't be safe till we're on the Jersey shore and within our lines."

"As you say, Rob. We can go the minute the minister says amen."

"It's about what we'll do. He has instructions to boil the form down to a strictly necessary basis. For my part, I think if he says 'I pronounce you man and wife' it will be enough."

"I wouldn't feel married with just that, but it would save some time for him to omit the obey."

"Not any, miss. That obey goes in if all the rest of the service is omitted. Your neck will soon be under the marriage yoke, Mrs. D——"

She gave a warning cry, and laid her fingers on his lips. "Don't call me that—yet. Don't you know it would bring bad luck?"

He kissed the detaining fingers. "You silly! Are you as superstitious as Mrs. Fitzmorris?"

"Ah, what a shock for auntie! Positively, I never expect her to speak to me again. And as for poor Uncle Peter, it will break his heart. Cousin Amanda will be properly horrified, but really she won't care much. But Alice will be delighted. Dear Alice! Rob, it was all I could do not to tell her."

"It's a good thing you didn't. We will send her word at once."

Tallmadge rode alongside. "We are almost there," he said. "Have you anything in the way of luggage, Miss Windham?"

"Nothing but a small satchel under the seat. Julia smuggled it out before the horses were put in."

"I will see that it is taken care of for you. Do you know that we made a quick trip? It looks as if we shall get off all right. In case of any excitement, keep cool. I have three pickets between here and the ferry, and they will keep a sharp lookout and give warning in time."

He rode ahead again, and in a moment the little party came out of the narrow road into the open highway, and not a quarter of a mile away their destination came into view, a big, rambling, comfortable country seat which had thus far remained in the possession of its owner. It had not been deemed

prudent to illuminate too brightly in honor of the event, but the lights that glowed brightly in the windows gave a cheerful and inviting aspect. Elizabeth felt her heart beating rapidly now that the moment was at hand, and instinctively she pressed nearer to Robert. He held her firmly for a moment, whispered a few words in her ear, the hoofs rang out more distinctly on the graveled walk, then stopped; the carriage drew up by the long low veranda, and their ride was over.

Afterwards it seemed to Elizabeth as if the remembrance of the next few minutes was far more definite than the actual impression of the moment. She was in a strange place and saw new faces, and the tension of her mood did not at once adjust itself to immediate realization. She heard voices and words of welcome, and while a tall, white-haired man held out his hand and bade her accept the hospitality of his roof, she saw Robert clasped in the arms of a sweet-faced woman, who kissed him and called him her dear son. A sprite of a child, whom she knew at once to be Robert's little sister, ran towards her, then stopped and surveyed her shyly, finger in mouth and golden-brown curls clustering about her head. The elderly gentleman presented his wife, and before her greeting was fairly uttered Robert was saying: "Elizabeth, this is my mother," and the sweet-faced woman un-

ceremoniously kissed her heartily, and said: "My dear, Robert has told me all about you, and I am glad that you are so soon to be my daughter. Come in. We are all ready and waiting for you."

There was no delay. Elizabeth was permitted only a few minutes in a dressing-room, while Julia deftly rearranged her hair and shook out her skirts. "'Deed, Miss Bess, you ain't never look so lovely in all yo' bo'n days. I 'clar to goodness ef I ever know how sweet yo' was befo'."

"Elizabeth," said Robert's mother, caressing her gently, "I cannot tell you how happy I am to-night. I have three sons, and Robert is the first to bring me another daughter."

"Mother! Mother! I love you."

"God bless you, my child."

"Bess! Hurry up!" The voice of the bridegroom-elect penetrated with nervous energy.

They went out at once. The rector held the open book, and began to read the marriage service before they had fairly arranged themselves. The tiny bridesmaid walked with a very important air, after the manner of children who innocently ape their elders, and Tallmadge supported Robert, standing near the window where he could keep an eye out. Julia stood in the parlor door, inwardly resolved to duplicate the gown of the bride on the occasion of her own

nuptials. The rector stolidly proceeded with the service.

"I, Robert, take thee, Elizabeth, to have and to hold ——"

"To have and to hold ——"

"To love, cherish, and protect ——"

"To love, cherish, and protect ——"

"In sickness and in health ——"

"In sickness and in health ——"

"Until death us do part ——"

"Until death us do part ——"

"I, Elizabeth, take thee, Robert ——"

"To have and to hold ——"

"In sickness and in health ——"

"To love, honor and ——"

"Colonel Tallmadge, we are attacked!" Paul dashed into the room and dashed out again. Tallmadge thrust the ring into Robert's hand and was out of the door like lightning. Elizabeth started, but Robert held her hand. The rector was impassive. Julia screamed.

"Go on," said Robert.

"To love, honor and obey ——"

"To love, honor and obey ——"

"Save the horses!" It was Tallmadge's voice outside.

"They're all right," said Paul.

Zip! A bullet crashed through the window and

shattered a vase of flowers under the wax candles by the rector. Six men filed into the room and knelt by the windows, resting their muskets on the sill. The rattle of their reply echoed on the night air. A rataplan of hoofs smote the drive outside. Robert did not move, and Elizabeth could not.

"Until death us do part ——"

"Until death us do part ——"

"I pronounce you man and ——"

Zip-p-p-p! The rector reached back of him and took up a musket, standing just behind him. The door was burst open and the leader of the attack, with drawn bayonet, and followed by several men, advanced towards Robert, who shouted: "Get back, Bess!" The clergyman beat down the bayonet with the butt of his musket, and Robert grappled with the man, who fought with furious strength, but was finally overpowered. Three privates bore the others to the floor and disarmed them.

"You are my prisoner," said Robert, to the leader.

The sharp crack of the musket firing continued from the windows. Robert's mother had taken Julia and two of the men up-stairs and caused candles to be lighted in every room and placed in the windows. She and Julia then loaded the muskets, and the men, going from room to room, and firing rapidly from the

windows, created the impression that the house was guarded by a strong force. In the yard Tallmadge and Paul, with a few men, had had a stiff fight to save the horses from being stampeded. Now they were safe, and Tallmadge rushed into the room, closely followed by Paul.

"I surrender," said the leader, sullenly.

"Cease firing," said Tallmadge. "All who have not run off are prisoners. I'll take care of this fellow." He motioned to a couple of privates, who deftly bound him.

Elizabeth had withdrawn to the parlor door, where, fascinated by the struggle, she had remained, not even crying out. The host and his wife had gone up-stairs to assist in the defense, and she would have been alone, had it not been for her small bridesmaid. The child had fled to her with the first shot, and Elizabeth hid the little curly head in her dress and pressed the trembling body so close to hers that the brave baby was persuaded into a sobbing but comforted plight.

The rector laid down his musket and resumed his position. Robert went to Elizabeth and took her by one hand and his small sister by the other.

"Don't cry, Tootsie. Come, Bess, we'd better finish this right quick. You're not hurt, are you?"

"No, Robert."

"Go on," said Robert, again.

"I pronounce you man and wife, and what God hath joined together let not man put asunder. Dearly beloved ——" he stretched out his hands, and uttered a brief benediction.

"My wife!" said Robert. He pressed her lips. The defending party came down-stairs and swarmed about them, uttering congratulations.

"Mrs. Dalrymple, I wish you much happiness." Tallmadge bowed deeply over her hand. "Rob, this has made us lose time. We'll have to get out right away. The horses are ready."

"You shall not go without at least a glass of wine," said the host. He led the way to the dining-room and said: "To the bride!"

"Who attacked us?" asked Elizabeth, as the company partook of sandwiches.

"A party of Refugees," replied Tallmadge. "Their leader in there is a man by the name of Wynne. He affected to remain neutral, but had his property seized by the British last summer, and ever since then he has been at the head of a lawless gang terrorizing the country and making attacks on both the British and the Americans. We have made a good catch."

"We must be off," said Robert. "We have prisoners to escort and our progress to the ferry will be a trifle hampered."

Speedy adieux were made. Robert's mother brought

out a fine white silk scarf and put it over Elizabeth's shoulders, saying: "It is getting late, my dear, and you must be protected from the night air on the water. This was one of my own wedding gifts, and now I give it to the first bride in the family. Take good care of her, my son."

"I will, mother. Good-bye. You are perfectly safe here now. We have captured the leader and three men, and the rest have fled. We are ready to go, Tallmadge."

The wedding party flocked out onto the veranda. "This is all too brief," said the host. "You are to come again and stay until we all know each other better."

"With pleasure," replied Robert, as he assisted Elizabeth to mount. "I'm a married man now, and I can't have another party like this, but I flatter myself this was a pleasant surprise to all concerned, with the exception of the unwilling guests who go with us."

Every one was in the saddle, and with parting salutes echoed from all they were off at a smart trot. As they rode out into the path apart from the highway Paul came alongside of Robert and Elizabeth.

"They've had time to find out," he said.

"I wonder if Alice has got there yet?" said Elizabeth. "I feel guilty about breaking my word to her."

"I don't think you broke it. You said you would start in time, and you certainly did."

"And Aunt Eliza didn't start early enough, and she has missed the show. Oh, what fits she is having by this time!"

"There is no doubt that our flight is known now," said Robert. "We must make the ferry without loss of time, and we have to go more slowly on account of these men we are taking along. We have bagged a pretty good lot for one night, one bride and five prisoners of war."

"How dare you name me with them, sir?"

"Oh, it's like enumerating the impedimenta of a baggage train. You've traveled with an army before, Bess."

They cantered merrily along. Every one was in high spirits, and they laughed and jested gaily. Paul broke out into a song, but was instantly and sternly checked by Tallmadge, who threatened to gag him if he opened his mouth again.

"We are to dine with the Chief, Bess," said Robert, "as soon as we can arrange to get to him. We will spend the time of my furlough at headquarters."

Tallmadge came alongside. "I'm going to ride ahead to the last picket, and see if the way is clear to the ferry. The man in our rear has just come up and

told me that no one is coming yet, but of course we're not safe until we are actually in the boat. We will let Sam go at the ferry. He can foot it to New Utrecht and take the carriage back with the story. Keep an eye out, Rob." He galloped off.

Paul had fallen behind. Robert drew his horse close to Elizabeth's, and laid his hand over hers on the bridle. "Dearest, at last you are mine. Do you remember the last time we met and parted?"

"Can I ever forget it!"

"Thank God, you are my wife now. The whole British army shall not take you from me."

It was nearly eleven o'clock. The late moon was rising, and her elongated orb showed pallidly through the fog that seemed to emanate from the ground. Elizabeth's white dress showed on the horse in a faint blur. Robert tenderly drew the silken scarf closer about her shoulders. "Are you chilled?"

"No."

"We are not more than a mile away. It will not take us long to cross the river, and then we will go home together." The last word came in a vibrant whisper. Elizabeth trembled with delicious fear. He was leaning towards her for a kiss, when he suddenly straightened himself in the saddle, and at the same instant she caught the swift gallop of hoofs behind them. Paul came thundering up.

"Run! Run! Peter is coming!"

"Bring Ben back!" cried Robert, and Paul shot by them like a whirlwind. "Julia," said Robert, "ride here by Mrs. Dalrymple, and keep your mouth shut. No screaming. Whip up, Bess. Close in back there!" The men obeyed instantly, and Robert rode forward and urged all to a gallop. Scarcely had he done so when Paul and Tallmadge returned, riding at break-neck speed.

"To the boat!" shouted Tallmadge, ordering three men by name. "Sam, if you will go and help at the boat I will let you go."

"'Deed I will, Marse Tallmadge, thankee."

"Ride like the devil, all of you! We're in for it now."

"It's less than a mile," said Robert, "and ——"

A shout came to them. In the distance was the thud of horses at a record breaking speed. Again the hallooing of men's voices reached them.

"See to the prisoners, Ben," said Robert. "I'll take care of the women. Bess! Julia! Stay here on each side of me. Now ride!" He struck all three horses with his whip, and they fairly jumped forward.

But the chase was closing in on them. Peter's voice was now distinctly heard. "Stop! Stop!" he yelled as never he had yelled before.

"Don't be frightened," said Robert. "They won't shoot."

"I won't go back."

"Steady in the saddle," said Robert. "Now!" The astonished horses broke into a mad gallop, and the whole cavalcade swept over the ground pounding the earth at a gait that lessened the distance between them and the pursuers. Elizabeth bent forward over her horse's neck and in a strange exultation gave herself fully up to the excitement of the flight. The rush of the night air, the flying procession of the ghostly trees, the chorus of the hoofs, thrilled her gloriously. She throbbed exultingly. To ride like this! And Robert by her! Ah, they would escape! She pressed her hand firmly on the neck of her mount in delightful confidence.

"We are gaining," said Robert. "Only a few minutes more."

"Come on!" shouted Tallmadge. "The boat is ready!"

The pursuing hoofs came closer behind them. Before them lay the river and they could see the men who had been sent on ahead holding the boat. "Come!" cried Tallmadge again. He jumped off of his horse, ran to the boat and hustled the prisoners into it. "Sam, we have to leave the horses. Take care of them, will you?"

"Yes, Marse Tallmadge."

"Stop! Stop! Bess!" Peter and Barrington were almost on their heels, the sweat-covered flanks of their horses showing the rate at which they had traveled.

"For God's sake, stop!" It was another voice.

"Barrington, by Jove!" cried Robert. "Jump, Bess!" She touched the ground lightly and ran to the boat, closely followed by Julia. Robert was the last one in.

"Push off, men!" cried Tallmadge.

The muffled dip of the oars bore the little craft out on the river. Peter and Barrington, shouting with all their might, jumped off and rushed towards the beach. Peter's hat had fallen off, and in the moonlight his face showed ghastly white. He threw out his arms beseechingly, and fairly wailed. "Bess! Come back! It's all right. Oh, don't go!" In his distraction he almost fell into the water. Barrington held him back.

"It's too late," he said.

From the boat, now rapidly slipping away, came a melodious gale of laughter, and above it rose Elizabeth's voice. She stood up and waved an end of the scarf at him.

"Good-bye, Uncle Peter. You didn't start soon enough!"

"For God's sake, forgive me!" The only answer vouchsafed was a roar of masculine voices, as the boat sped towards the Jersey shore.

"You'll take cold, Peter," said Barrington. "Better come home."

Paul was convulsed. "Oh, I can see him riding back, tears slopping down into his boots and cursing himself for a fool!"

Tallmadge was mopping his eyes. "This beats a death-bed repentance all hollow."

"Well, I'll choose Barrington to chase me," said Robert. "This is the second time, and I can beat him running."

"Is it all over?" asked Paul. "It's been such a jolly scrape I'd like to begin all over again. Wouldn't you, Bess?"

Elizabeth slipped her hand into Robert's under cover of the friendly scarf. "Yes, if the end were to be the same."

"It is an end which is a beginning," said Robert, clearly. "Paul, go thou and do likewise. It was worth it. Julia, what is the matter?"

The girl had been leaning over the side of the boat, looking down into the water, unheeding the flow of mirth around her. She sat up and addressed herself directly to Robert.

"'Deed, thar ain' nuffin' the matter with me, Marse

Robert. I done give Sam a message for dat Adolph, an' I reckon he give it to him." She resumed the contemplation of her image in the water.

The muffled oars bore them swiftly towards the Jersey shore.

Appendix

NOTES

My principal authority for the historical basis of this romance is "Recollections of the *Jersey* Prison Ship," by Capt. Thomas Dring, of Providence, R. I. Captain Dring was a prisoner on board the *Jersey*, and the "Recollections" were prepared for publication from his original manuscript. At the age of sixty-six, being in good health and with unimpaired faculties, he wrote the notes from which the book was subsequently compiled, and the accuracy of his account is verified beyond the possibility of dispute, being especially corroborated by the other memoirs and memoranda left on the subject, though none of them enter into the detail of Captain Dring's narrative. I have taken but one liberty with history in this story, and that is of representing the *Jersey* as being used as a prison ship as early in the Revolution as 1776, when the earliest date set is 1778, and there is little doubt that she was not a prison ship until 1781 or 1782, when she was so used to the close of the war.—As my chief design in this little story was to use the almost unknown theme of the prison ships, the locality would naturally be New York City, and as the principal events of the closing years of the Revolution were in the South, I simply antedated the use of the *Jersey* in the Wale Bogt in order to avoid covering a wider field than necessary. In every detail, however, I have aimed at accuracy, and, so far as life on the *Jersey* is concerned, the reader may rest assured that its horrors have been necessarily softened in order to bring the story within the pale of general reading. The brutal frankness of Captain Dring's narrative is not suited to modern literature, and the study of details was a terrible and revolting task, sweetened only by one thought—thank God, they died for Liberty!

Appendix

Note—Chapter IV

The exact number of prisoners who died on board the *Jersey*, the *Good Hope*, *Scorpion*, *Hunter* and others is not accurately determined, but is probably not less than eleven thousand. The *Jersey* was the largest and best known of these prison ships, and her very name was a synonym for terror. It is said that the mortality on board of the *Jersey* was greater in proportion to the number of souls than has ever been recorded of any other prison in the world. Captain Dring, in his narrative, relates that as he and his unfortunate companions were being rowed out to the *Jersey*, David Sproat, the hated commissary of naval prisoners, pointed to the *Jersey*, and said, exultingly: "There, rebels, there is the cage for you."

Note—Chapter VI

The great bulk of prisoners confined in the British prison ships were seamen, many of them being captured in the merchant service or the coasting trade. The men were constantly offered their freedom, rank and honors, if they would desert the "rebel" cause and join the King's army, but it is stated in every memoir I have been able to find that only *one* ever thus deserted. He was followed from the ship by the groans, curses and imprecations of his companions who chose to remain. Washington's correspondence with the British Admiral on the subject of the exchange of the prisoners throws a sad light on the difficulties he encountered.

Note—Chapter IX

In this chapter I have closely followed Captain Dring's account of a Fourth of July celebration on board the *Jersey*.

Note—Chapter X

The tortures of a night without water and with an inadequate supply of air have been made familiar by the accounts of the Black Hole of Calcutta, and that night is the only parallel in history to the one spent by the prisoners on board the *Jersey* when they were driven

below at sunset on the evening of the Fourth of July. In the Black Hole of Calcutta one hundred and forty-six persons were shut up at night, and only twenty-three were alive in the morning, but the space they occupied was only twenty feet square. There were about a thousand men on the *Jersey*, and only ten died that night, but the space they occupied was much larger, the circulation of air better, and there was a limited supply of water.—Nevertheless, the horror and suffering of the night on the *Jersey* seemed even greater to me than the one in which the mortality was larger, for many more individuals suffered.

Note—Chapter XI

Cunningham was executed in England for forgery several years after the Revolution. Before his death he made a full confession of his many crimes, including his cruelties to the American prisoners in New York City, and confessed that he had executed many at his own pleasure and without orders, and had caused the death of hundreds of others by feeding them on polluted and decaying food while he pocketed the gains he stole from the appropriation for the prisoners. His name is universally detested, both in England and the United States.

Note—Chapter XV

This chapter is based on Captain Dring's account of an attempt to escape. All memoirs unite in saying that no clergyman or priest was ever on board, and that no attempt at religious service of any kind was made, save a few addresses by a layman. If a prayer was ever uttered on board, there is no record of it.

Note—Chapters XVIII and XIX

The portions of these chapters describing the Mischianza are drawn from the only account ever written of it, the one left by André.—Although the scene may be familiar to some readers, I chose to use it with full credit to the original author, on whose description one might not hope to improve.

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